Christ Is All

JAMES ALLAN FRANCIS

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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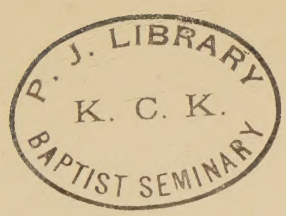

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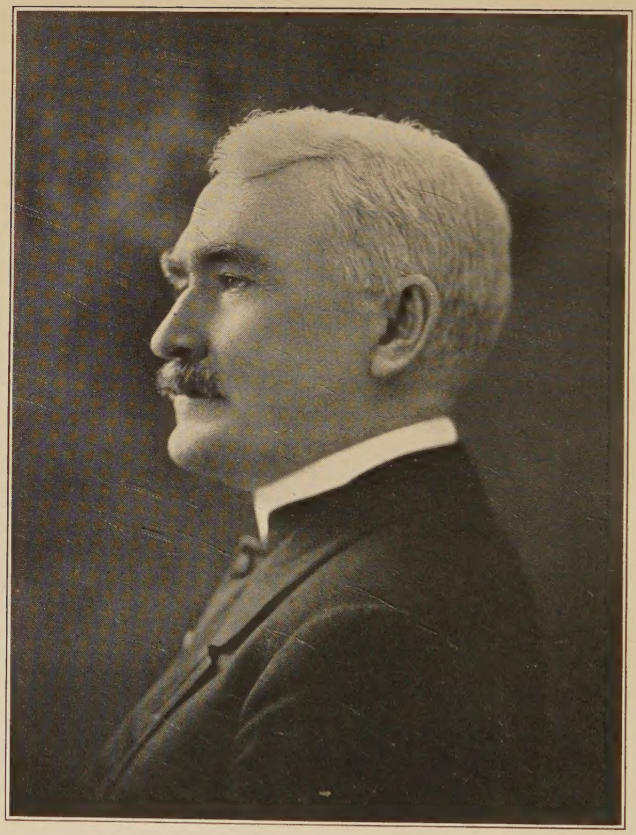

JAMES ALLAN FRANCIS, D. D., LL. D.

CHRIST IS ALL

AND OTHER SERMONS

By

JAMES ALLAN FRANCIS, D. D., LL. D.

Sermons
Title

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To the one whose kindly criticism and constant encouragement made this little volume possible; the companion of thirty-six years of ups and downs; this volume is affectionately dedicated.

JAMES ALLAN FRANCIS.

10530

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THESE sermons were not claimed by Doctor Francis to be finished productions. They are rather hot coals from off the altar of the Lord. They are printed just as they were delivered, without a note to refresh his memory, but were taken down in shorthand by a member of the congregation.

Doctor Francis was so genuinely modest with regard to his work that he failed to see the permanent value in his sermons which his hearers could discern, and never took pains himself to preserve the results of his rich life and experience. Hence we are fortunate to have produced in this manner the sermons here presented. The manuscripts were collected by a friend and offered for acceptance during Doctor Francis' illness, and their publication finally, but reluctantly, received his approval. We feel sure they will be a blessing to hundreds of readers as they already have been to members of the First Baptist Church of Los Angeles.

P. C. P.

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I

CHRIST IS ALL

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.
—John 14: 8.

CHRIST IS ALL

You have stood sometimes at the foot of a great mountain and have looked up to where its shining summit pierced the blue. At first look, it did not appear so huge, but as you gazed and gazed, it grew upon you until there came over you that which you could not express.

I invite you to stand this morning at the foot, not of one great mountain, but of two. I shall call them twin peaks of divine revelation. One of them is a sentence that the Master uttered on the last night of his earthly life; the other a sentence spoken after he had left the grave behind and was standing on heaven's side of an empty tomb.

Let us turn to the first one. It was the last night of his earthly life. He was not giving an address. It was not formal enough to be called an address. It was an intimate, heart-to-heart talk with those who had followed him for three years, and he was allowing them to interrupt him as they pleased. As he was speaking, presently one of them interrupted him with a question. It was the greatest question ever asked on earth. No man has ever asked a question that could overtop this one. One near to him, one who was looking into his face, almost close enough to hear the beating of his heart, said, " Master, show us the Father, and we shall

be satisfied." I beg you to notice that no one will ever ask a question to the end of time that will go beyond that. That is the last ultimate thing in human belief and in human conduct. "Show us what God is like." "Show us the Father."

Was Jesus nonplussed? Was he taken back? Did he have to hesitate? Never! His answer came quick and clear, and it is the last word on the subject. He said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

"You ask what God is like? He is just like me." He said it. Yes, it is out. I don't think they could take in at the first moment how much that meant. After twenty centuries, we gasp when we think how much it means. It means that mankind through all future ages, will check up their conceptions of God by him; and after the search-light of nineteen hundred years has been turned upon Jesus, instead of this seeming absurd, instead of its seeming too high, we feel like saying, "If God in heaven is not like that man, then he had better be."

Tremendous! Awful! "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Then when I find Jesus Christ, I don't have to go any farther. I haven't found the entrance to the way. I have found the end of the way. I have not found a clue to God. I have found God.

John, when you leaned your head upon the bosom of Christ, you leaned your head upon the beating heart of God. Friend, the day when you found Jesus

you did not find some sign-post saying, "This way and you will find God." You found the full religious value of God. When I found Christ, I found the goal. I can bow at his feet and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

I beg you to notice that when Jesus said that, the greatest declaration he was going to make about God had not yet been made, and the finest exposition concerning God he was going to give had not yet been given, because the greatest declaration he made about God was not made in a sermon, nor in a miracle, nor in words at all. It could not be told in words, not even in God's words. There are some things words cannot explain, and even the words of heaven would be beggared if they tried to explain this. When in silence and darkness he stretched himself upon the cross and allowed himself to be crucified between two thieves as the world's sacrifice, he revealed the last thing there is in the heart of God toward men. The Cross is the declaration and the revelation at one point in time of something that is eternal in God. When Christ died on Calvary, he showed something concerning God that existed before the morning stars began to shine and something that will be in existence to the end of eternity. It was as if he gathered from all the ages of the past as well as the future the deepest and highest things that God knows about himself, and focused it in human hearts in words immortal. When the Master said, "He that hath seen me hath seen

the Father," it is almost as if he said, "Watch me tomorrow, and add what I do tomorrow to all I have said and done in my life, and then you will know what God is like."

We have found a resting-place. We have found a goal. We have found God. The earthly life of Jesus is the human life of God, and the Cross of Calvary is the dying sacrifice of God on behalf of men. Beware of the frame of mind that leads people to carve up things concerning the Cross and put them in their proper pigeonhole and say, "I know all about it." The man who thinks he knows all about the Cross of Calvary has not begun to think. He doesn't know its a, b, c's.

What do I see here? I see two tides meeting. I don't fully understand either one. One is the tide of human sin and human hatred surging up. It has been gathering its force since time began, and if it could, it would have destroyed God. Then I see another tide, the greatest tide of divine love coming down out of eternity from God. A tide that has never been altered by human sin; a tide that is as great as if man had always been pure from the beginning. Here we see excess swallowed up by excess—excess of selfishness and hate swallowed up by excess of divine love. We see the deepest question of human life, questions that you can't put into words; questions that rise from the depths of man's soul when he is tempted, when he is guilty and knows he is guilty; all the questions man

ever asks, answered by God's taking the place of the sinner, and God in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Jesus says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

We draw one conclusion that we are sure of. *Sacrificial love is the hall-mark of the heart of God and of the highest life in the universe.* If you want to know what kind of emotions beat in the center of the universe, if you want to know what is back of everything, and what kind of a universe we are living in, this is the answer, that the first and highest thing in all the universe is sacrificial love. That is the kind of love in the heart of the Eternal, and that is what God is.

That is the first peak. Can you see the highest tip of it? I cannot. Its blue pierces the heavens, but I know that it is up there. "The eye that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

That man will take off his shoes presently and do the most menial work, a job that belongs to the Galilean slave. He will wash the feet of those Galilean fishermen with as much tenderness as that with which a mother bathes the body of her little child. And tomorrow he will give his body to be crucified, and when they are adding every ignominy that fiendishness can devise, he will pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

He that hath seen Jesus on the cross hath seen the Father. I commend you to take a fresh look at Christ,

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or rather God, on the cross. If that is true, and it is, then every conception of God that ever comes to you, no matter where it comes from—from the imaginings of your own heart, or from some genius, or from some of the pagan religions of the ancient world—every conception of God that ever crosses the threshold of your heart or mine, we have a right to take to this judgment-seat and let it stand or fall by this standard. The One who could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is the standard, and every religious conception in this world has the right to be measured by that standard, whether it is true to Christ and Christ's own ideals or not. Master, we thank thee.

Now turn and look at the other mountain. He has died. He has risen from the dead. The grave is behind him. Heaven is before him. The ages of the church's history are before him. He gathered his disciples together on a mountain in Galilee and said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore."

Go back to that other sentence. What is the central word? "He that hath seen me, *me*, ME!"

What is the central word in this sentence? "All authority hath been given unto *me*."

Let me put the two "me's" side by side. In the first Jesus says, "Look at *me*, and you will see the Father." Now I turn to the other, and what do I find? Jesus makes this astounding declaration: "*This sacrificial life in me is going to be exalted to the right hand of*

God. It is the regnant principle of the universe, and *it is my Father's intention to elevate all men to that level before he gets through."*

Oh, Master, that is too high! "But it is not too high for God's courage and God's power. The everlasting covenant under which my Father has placed himself is to bring human life to that level, human life that appears so selfish, so sordid, life that starts out well and then like a stream in desert sands is lost. My life is not only the sample but the norm to which human life will be conformed and you shall be like me." I confess, it makes me gasp when I look at the things I have said, and the only reason I dare is because Jesus has already said them.

There is no biography of Christ in existence. We have the story of his birth. There is a great deal of disputing around the manger of Bethlehem, that is in very bad taste indeed. Folks are prying and asking how God brought about this thing, that man should walk the earth with all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. There are three things that keep me from such questions: (1) My sense of the limitations of my own knowledge; (2) reverence toward God; (3) a sense of common decency.

The story as we have it in the New Testament is good enough for me, and I wish we could leave it there and acknowledge that around the manger of Bethlehem is a good place to worship but a bad place to dispute.

We have no biography of Jesus. The story of his

birth; twelve years of silence, and then three sentences; eighteen years of silence and then—what? The story of his life? No! We have only what he did part of the time on about thirty-five days out of the three years, then the story of his approach to the cross and his death. If you will print in ordinary newspaper type every syllable in the possession of the world about Christ, it will make a book just about as big as that.

Don't draw false conclusions from that. Don't draw the conclusion that we know little about Christ. Such is the character of the information that we actually know Jesus better than any other character that ever lived, than Plato, Cæsar, Napoleon, Gladstone, or Sir Isaac Newton. Every sentence in that little volume is like a lightning flash that illumines the whole of his life and spirit. Suppose for a moment that this room is perfectly dark. Then comes a lightning flash that illumines the room, then it is gone, but it leaves an impression on the retina of my eye, though I don't see it all. Then, there is another flash; and I see more this time, some of the people, Mr. So-and-so, perhaps the taller ones or the ones with white hair like mine, but if there are enough flashes I get a definite impression of the room. Those jewels, four words long, upon the stretched forefinger of all time—the sentences in which he describes himself and God—are the lightning flashes revealing to us what is in the character of God and the earthly life of Jesus.

He is the only character in human history about

whose character we are sure. Of all the disputes that have rent the world, there has never been one about the personal character of Jesus. All agree on the personal character of Jesus. There is not the slightest chance of disagreement. He says, " All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth; go ye, therefore."

It is this: " Men and women of the world, I serve notice on you that this life which I am living among men is exalted to the right hand of God, and that it is going to be the standard and norm of all time. *The only thing I ask is that you conform yourself to my likeness."*

How easy it is to state a doctrine! How difficult to live a life! How easy it is to adopt a creed! How difficult to live like Jesus Christ! Any man can hold a creed, and the bigger devil he is, the more savagely he will hold it, but any kind of a man can't live up to this. The thing is not for us to adopt a creed, but to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. Your life and mine will be powerful, not in proportion to the dogmatism of our creed, but in proportion to its likeness to Christ. The person who knows all about the Cross of Christ does not know anything about it.

Paul and Peter and John were first-century Jews, and they saw Jesus through the framework of first-century Jews. That is the only way they could see him. They were men and women of their own time. Am I belittling these men? Take Paul! My con-

viction is that he is the greatest character ever seen, except Christ. I believe the Christian church owes that man a greater debt than we owe any other man. But Paul was a man of the first century, and he looked at Jesus through first-century eyes, and thought about him through the framework of first-century thought.

Now, must I always look at Christ only through the framework of the thinking of the first century, or am I also permitted to look at Christ through the framework of the twentieth century? Isn't Christ as much at home in the twentieth century as in the first? Won't he walk with me in the fields of California as much as he did in the fields of Galilee? It is our business to look at Christ through the framework of those first-century men and get their view-point, and then take that thing and bring it into the twentieth century and take a fresh look at the Son of God, not from the hilltops of Palestine, but from the hilltops where we see him in the twentieth century. Some one says, "What if one contradicts the other?" It won't. No century has ever seen all there is of Christ. What I am pleading for is the liberty of enlargement, not the liberty of disbelief in Christ, for the liberty of believing more and more. I don't believe he ever was as wonderful to the hearts and minds of men as he is today. Everything that man knows about the crust of the earth, everything man knows about the stars, about the secret chambers of the soul (what we call psychology), everything is the servant of Christ and

helps to interpret him who is the center of the whole of it.

God help me to look at Christ with honest eyes, eyes that are my own, to look at him with the help of all who knew him on earth; let me look at him from all sources and ask him to prove to me what he proved to be to them. Let Christ be to us what he was to them, the inspirer of our lives, the redeemer of our souls, the Saviour of our characters, the transformer of our inner man, the everlasting inspiration of all our hopes, our starting-point, our goal, the revelation of God, the revelation of man, the revelation of life beyond the grave—"Christ, only Christ, and let the name suffice."

II

KNOWING THE UNKNOWN

But now——

—Acts 17: 30.

KNOWING THE UNKNOWN

I have for a text just two words, the two pivotal words in this great address of the apostle Paul. You will find them in the thirtieth verse of the seventeenth chapter of Acts, "*But now.*" In the verses that precede these words, he had been reviewing the history of heathenism from the beginning down to that time. Nowhere that I know of in the literature of this world can you find such a description as is here given. He spoke of what may be known of God through nature. Then he said, "But now," as if to say, "We have come to a new turning-point in the history of the ages." Then there follow some of the implications that grow out of the knowledge that Jesus Christ has come.

Let me indulge in a parable. We were seated, ten of us, in a room, when some one complained that the room was a little chilly. The host said, "Is it true?" He rose and touched an electric button. In less than ten minutes some one said: "Why, how comfortable it is now. How much did you raise the temperature?" He stepped over to a thermometer, looked at it and replied, "Just ten degrees." The little gathering broke up and as we went out, I said to one of the men, "Did you experience that heat?" And he said, "I did." "What is heat?" said I. "I don't know what it is,"

he replied. "Do you know anybody that does know?" "No." "Do you know anybody who knows of anybody that knows?" "No." "But you say you felt it." "Yes, I have a first-hand experience of heat. I know heat, but if you ask for a definition of it, I cannot give it." This is a parable. Don't try to give a definition of God. It cannot be done.

I was brought up in the Presbyterian Church. I was trained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. I remember very well one of the questions, "Who is God?" and the answer, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." I doubt if that definition has ever been bettered by anybody, but it is not a definition of God. Don't try to coin a definition of God because you cannot, any more than the people in that room could coin a definition of heat. But while I cannot coin a definition of heat, I can feel heat and get all the benefit from it. Even so, though I cannot coin a definition of God, I can come to God and I can receive first-hand experience so that I may be able to say, "I know him." Do I know all about him? No! and I don't believe I will know all about him when I have been in heaven a million years. But I can know him.

Paul was on his second missionary journey. Paul is a combination of Francis of Assisi and Theodore Roosevelt. He had the mysticism of St. Francis and, at the same time, he had the fighting edge of our "Teddy." As he traveled, there were three kinds of

people he preached to. First, the Jews. The first place he made for when he went into a city was the synagogue. Some of the Jews listened to him and accepted his message, and some wanted to kill him. Then there was a second class of people. All those cities around the Mediterranean had their quota of educated Greeks, some of whom were seekers after God and some had a considerable knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. Then, he also found persons who were called "barbarians." That did not mean people dressed in paint and feathers, but people outside the Hebrew or Greek pale. He conceived that his message was to all the world. He did not believe that Jesus Christ was a provincial character.

He came from Antioch to Derbe, to Lystra, through Phrygia and Galatia, to Troas, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea, and finally to Athens. While he was waiting for his friends to catch up with him, he walked around the town. It was not a big city. I don't suppose that, at its biggest, it was as big as Pomona, but it produced more great intellects in about two hundred years than any city, large or small, has ever produced in the same space of time before or since. It set the pace for intellectuality for all time, and today scholars ponder with delight the things that came from far-off Athens.

Paul is reported to have been defective in his eyesight, but if he was, he saw more than most people. What you see depends on what you already have within

you. A horse and his rider stopped on a hilltop. The rider sat there entranced as he gazed off across the valley. He said, "I have never viewed a scene that I enjoyed more than this." The horse's face was turned in the same direction that the man's was, but all he saw was the tuft of grass for which he was reaching. Two men may go to the same city, and how different will be the things they see! I will not stop to describe them.

But as Paul walked about, he noticed the gods, goddesses, and shrines. They had one god who took care of the crops, and one who took care of birth, and one of death, one of wind and waves, and a god to whom they appealed when they went to war. They had these things all segregated into departments. As he walked about he came upon a very strange thing. Some thoughtful Greek—I wonder who he was—had erected an altar to "The Unknown God." There is cultured heathenism in pathetic confession that with all their seeking they had not arrived at a knowledge of him. Paul talked to any one who would listen to him, and finally some Epicureans came and said, "What is this man preaching about?" "He is preaching about something we never heard of—a resurrection of the dead." Their tombs often bore this inscription,

> Beyond this sleep there is no waking,
> Beyond the grave there is no knowing.

To them life was a dark, narrow vale between the bleak mountain peaks of two eternities, and beyond

them they could neither see nor guess. And here, Paul declared, was a man who had died on a tree between two thieves and arose from the dead and was alive today. The Athenians were a nation of gossipers. We are told they spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.

I think Los Angeles ought to have a lot of sympathy with Athens. Forty years ago, if a man had a new religion, he took it to Boston to get it patented, but he doesn't now. He brings it to Los Angeles. They took Paul to the Areopagus, and said, "If you have anything to say, say it now." Paul wanted nothing better, and this mighty man, mighty in culture, mighty in sympathy with all races, mighty in purpose, but especially mighty in that he had been endued from on high, mighty in that he had a message from God, opened his mouth and began to speak. He said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious." My, but he was courteous. It reads in the old version, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." He didn't use that word. He said, "Religious." Mankind is incurably religious. I don't mean that men are naturally Christians, but naturally religious. I think you could stop men from eating bread about as soon as you could stop them from worshiping something. When a man professes himself to be an atheist, his own heart belies him. It is only from the lips out. The same One that made this world made your soul and mine, and he implanted a longing to

come into touch with the great First Cause, the Ruler of the universe.

Paul said, "I perceive that in all things you are very religious." They all knew what he was talking about. He said, "I beheld an altar with this inscription, 'To the Unknown God.'" Now, listen to the next sentence! Wasn't he a diplomat? "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. I have come to tell you about that God whom you seek and whom, according to your own acknowledgment, you do not know."

There are two things I beg you to notice. Look at the first. *They were worshiping.* Most of the folks in Athens worshiped some one some time. If they went to war they all thronged around and worshiped the God of War. If some one went to sea, they worshiped the God of the Sea. It was a very ignorant worship. It was a very foolish worship for people who were as wise as they in other directions. But dream a little with me. As the living God looked down upon the life of Athens, do you think that he scorned it, that he scoffed at all that worship? Or did the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ say, "I am the receiver of all worship, no matter what name they use"? As he saw them looking at the idol and thinking of some one behind the idol, I wonder if it was not with infinite sympathy that God looked at them. I believe that God looks with sympathetic eyes upon the worship of the heathen, crude and mistaken as it is.

The second thing I am going to ask you to look at is this: *the confession that with all the gods they had, they were not satisfied and were reaching beyond them to a God who was not known.* God never can be known by men unless he makes himself known. I haven't any ladder long enough to reach to him, but he has a ladder long enough to reach to me. A man started out to make his fortune. Among other things he was looking for a wife. He had left a rather uncanny situation behind him in his old home. He had made a trade with his brother and got the better of the trade. His brother had said he was going to kill him. He fled. He lay down at night with only a stone for his pillow, and that night he dreamed he saw a ladder; the top of it reached to heaven, but its foot rested on Mother Earth beside him. He wasn't invited to climb the ladder. He was invited to listen to the message that came from on high. Man cannot lift himself to God's plane of thinking, but God can stoop down and put the everlasting arms of mercy around man. God cannot be known by man unless he makes himself known, and Paul's great message was to make God known. Listen to him a little. "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." That is, he is not a local God. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth." He is ruler as well as creator. "Neither is he worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything." He is self-sufficient, the source of every-

thing. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." The God of Providence, the God who put the Chinese in China, the Japanese in Japan, the Afghans in Afghanistan, and you here in California, a God that can be sought and found, "though he is not far from every one of us," he is the medium, the atmosphere in which "we live and move and have our being." Paul has not said anything about the Old Testament. Why? Because he is talking to an audience that does not know anything about the Old Testament. "As one of your own poets has said, For we are also his offspring." And now he brought out a daring thing: "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device." He was referring to those images that he saw around town. "The times of this ignorance God overlooked." How long? Since the beginning.

And now I come to my text, "*But now.*" I wonder with what kind of solemn emphasis the apostle said that. After reviewing all that could be known of God through nature, and showing them from the book of nature how irrational and unreasonable their attempts at worship were, he said, "But now." What does it mean? It means that a new era has been ushered in, that God has turned a corner in human history, that something has happened that is going to change the moral climate of the world. "But now." Paul, what

is this tremendous thing that has happened? Is it something that Cæsar has done in Rome? Is it something that the Sanhedrin has done in Jerusalem? They don't know anything about it. It is something that eternal God has done. What is it? It is this. Jesus has come! A babe has been born in Bethlehem of Judea. A man has preached up and down Judea. That man has worked miracles and taught concerning God, and that man is the revelation of God. "But now!" As if he would say, "From this point onward the adventure of human life is to be a different thing from what it ever was before." Why? *Because Jesus has come!*

I was refreshed the other day to hear a speaker call our attention to the figure a man cuts when he tries to patronize Jesus Christ as if he could do him a favor. It got hold of me. I never heard it just that way before. Here is the mighty apostle, setting the thing forth. "But now." In those two words he implies the stream of history that has gone on and on, and the light which has grown brighter and brighter with the ages. Something has happened that God has been preparing for from the beginning. Paul has brought out the grand plan of the ages, and it is incarnated in a Man who lives the life of God on earth in such a way that when you see him you see the Father, a man who died for sin. How do I know that Jesus Christ died for human sin? I don't have to depend on Paul, or on John, or on James, or on Jeremiah, or on the

angels in heaven, to tell me. Why? Because, if ever a man knew what he was dying for, Jesus Christ did. On the last night of his earthly life, he said: "I lay down my life. This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for you."

The tremendous fact stands from Christ, himself, that *his death was for sin.* Paul goes on to tell them that this man has risen into eternal life and will live forever. I wish we had the whole of that address. There are only a few scraps of it here. You cannot imagine Paul saying only these few words. Probably for an hour or two he brought home to them that God had come into this world through Christ, and that through Christ he said to each darkened and sin-cursed soul: "I know your need. I know how you have sinned and how sin has gripped your heart and life. I know how far you are from being the man you ought to be. I come and confront your life, and I have brought with me all of God, all of his power, all of his grace, all of his redeeming power, all of his regenerating energy. All that you will ever need is in me, and I want you to be my follower." That is the Christ Paul proclaims. I don't wonder that when he came to that point in his address, when he came to the place where he was going to introduce Christ, he cried out, "BUT NOW." And then followed the tremendous announcement of Jesus, that he is the standard of human life, that by him men will be judged at last.

Now let me apply it close home, to our individual

lives. Do you actually believe that out from heaven there has come the Son of the living God, and that he lived on this earth to reveal God, and that the story of Jesus is the story of God, wearing a human garment, getting near to his children in the most neighborly fashion he could? Do you *really* believe that Christ knows all about your sin, and how far you have come short, and do you really believe that he died for your redemption?

And now do you believe that he rose from the dead, and that he is really here, as really as if you saw him walk down this aisle, and heard him say, "Follow me"? Do you believe he is alive today, to be the neighbor and friend of each of us? "Neighbor" really is "nighbor," a man who lives nigh to us. Jesus goes further than that. He doesn't say he wants to live next door or in the next room or even in the same room. He says, "I have come to dwell in you, that our lives may be inseparable." There are some people who think they have scored a great success if they make their lives parallel to Christ's. You know from geometry that parallels never meet.

Do you believe that you are confronted with One, the majesty of whose presence no one can describe, the kindness of whose heart is beyond all telling, the strength of whose arm is so great that he strung the stars into place and scattered the earths to be the beacons of his glory, and he says, "I know your sin, and my grace is greater than your sin; come unto me,

and let me walk with you the rest of the way"? That is the gospel and nothing less than that is the gospel: an infinite Christ who never met a man or a woman whom he could not save. He met some who would not be saved. You cannot construct by any of the diabolical processes of sin a situation that the Lord Jesus will back off from and say, "That is too much for me." "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound." What we have is a Saviour with surplus salvation that overflows, and when we draw up to him and say, "Without one plea, just as I am," we get the same kind of welcome he used to give when he was in earth.

Do you believe, member of the First Baptist Church, that in addition to Jesus confronting us as individuals, he confronts us as a church and says, "I know the task I have set you, and I am able to see you through to victory and *then some,*" do you believe that? Let us face him first with our own hearts and the confessions that every heart makes. There is one ear where you can pour your confession and leave out nothing, and Jesus will say: "I know it all. Come unto me. I was waiting for you. Come. I have enough. I am able to save to the uttermost." Shall we face him as a church and say, "Christ, we know thou hast called us to a big mission, and we believe that thou art going to enable us to fulfil this mission, and we give our heart and hand to the regnant Saviour, and we believe thou wilt lead us to full and complete victory."

III

THE PULL OF THE RESURRECTION HOPE

Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

—1 John 3: 2.

THE PULL OF THE RESURRECTION HOPE

Palestine is a long way from here. Nineteen hundred years is a long time in human history. Why is it that an event away back yonder on the horizon of the centuries, an event which occurred in a rather obscure corner of the earth, has such mighty influence today, that across every continent and every far-flung island of the sea special services will be held this Easter morning in recognition of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? While this event occurred at one point of time, it has to do with all time. While you can point to the spot and exact date it took place, it is contemporaneous with every age and has relations with all mankind.

My thoughts turn to the following text: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Please notice four things:

1. A present certainty—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

2. The limitations of our knowledge—"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

3. One glorious certainty over there—"We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

4. The effect, the reflex influence, of that hope upon our lives right now.

A present certainty, a limitation to our knowledge of the future, one glorious future, certainty in the midst of much that we do not know, and then the effect that that hope has on our present living. Here are four great mountain peaks. All we can do is to touch the tops where the glint of the sun is seen. Let us begin with the first.

1. *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God"*—as if he wrote it with great deliberation. He was not talking about the whole world, but about that body of people who have believed in Jesus Christ, and he was separating them from the rest of the world when he said, "Now are we the sons of God."

Some one asks: "Are not all men sons of God? Don't you endorse that beautiful language in Phillips Brooks' hymn, which says, 'Mankind are the children of God'?"

There is a potential sonship of God in every human being but, alas! alas! many of our race are like the prodigal, who is in a far country, has no fellowship with his Father, and as far as it is possible for him to do so, has orphaned himself, though his parentage is on high. Yes, in one sense the whole human family are the sons of God, but what is the good of a sonship that is not operative, that does not bring the son into any contact or fellowship with the Father? So a man who lives away from God, though he is potentially a

son of God, has through sin become a self-orphaned soul as far as sin can make an orphan of a man in this universe. So John writes these tremendous words. I think if you had gotten hold of John and said, "Don't you believe there is a universal sonship of God"? he would have answered, "Certainly, I do."

And yet it was he who wrote these words, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

It is in this second, higher, deeper, more intimate, more magnificent, farther-reaching meaning of the word that John uses it when he says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

He is not talking about the universal sonship that all men possess by virtue of their birth, but of the relation into which they come through fellowship with him in Jesus Christ.

What is the hall-mark of this sonship? The sense is this: As many as are indwelt by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. The hall-mark of being sons and daughters of God is the indwelling of his Spirit. It is not an exterior and artificial thing. It is not a thing the title of which can be written in any parchment. If the seal is not in your own heart, it is not anywhere as there is no way of proving you are a son of God except by exhibiting his Spirit. John says elsewhere, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."

When he turns to those who do not dwell in love, he says, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

There is no such thing as real, experimental sonship apart from fellowship with God. I am not talking about the life to come. I am talking about the life you are living right through this very Easter Day. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

Without going into the future life, the person who is related to God can say, "I already have a foretaste of the life to come and I know what it is to look up and tremblingly, and yet believingly, say, 'I am a child of God, and he is my Father.'"

2. John and those who are associated with him believe that *the life that we now have is the prophecy of something finer to come.*

Imagine, if you will, an acorn endowed with intelligence and foresight! The little thing is lying there in the ground, and it feels, and it thinks, and it says, "I know by what I feel within me that I am destined for something more than an acorn. It doth not yet appear what I shall be; I know I am not going to lie here always as an acorn."

Of course, the acorn could not tell you that he is going to be a giant oak a hundred years from now, but life now is always a prophecy of what is beyond.

Here is a little child. Can you imagine that little child saying: "I am going to grow up. I am not

always going to be learning to spell 'd-o-g' and 'c-a-t.'"

He feels within himself the stirrings of something that tells him he is not going to be always a little boy. That little child, however, cannot know that the time will come when he will range the fields of science, or literature, and of religion, and when the universe itself will be his real home, and he will think thoughts as wide and as long as the universe. That strange thing that has this prophecy in it is what we call life. I might go on. I will only add this, that the true Christian, who has felt in his heart the stirrings of a grace divine, who knows what it is to have God help him overcome sin, looks out into the future and says, "This is the prophecy of something greater beyond; this is the beginning, but it is the beginning of something that has God in it."

Given a human soul with the consciousness that God is within, and then given the long stretches of eternity, and once you put this and that together, while it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we dare to believe that some day we shall be like him.

It augurs something beyond. That is what John means. Let me read it: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." That gives that second sentence its vast reach, its lift into the unseen. "It doth not yet appear."

"Very well, John, if you say that, we shall all have to say it. You companied with Jesus in the days of his flesh. You walked with him beneath the Syrian blue. You sat on the hillside as he unveiled as much of eternity as it was possible to unveil. If you have to say, 'It doth not yet appear,' I guess we shall have to join in the chorus and say, 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.'"

Again and again in literature, and in religious literature too, we find people claiming to be a good deal wiser than they really are. Dear friends, it will not hurt us to say concerning that future life, "There is much we do not know, and that we shall not know until we see it under the light of a better day."

3. But John is not through! He says, *"One thing I know."* In the midst of much that is not so much uncertain as unknown, but is uncharted for you and me, it simply means that we would not be at home there with the present limitations of our knowledge. Praise God there is one shining certainty: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, *but we know.*"

When a man has companied with Jesus and has walked and talked with him, and has seen him on the slope of Olivet, and seen him die, when that man has mulled it over for forty years, and at last comes forward in speech, you had better listen to what he says. "John, what is this great thing you know? You have given us to understand it is no use to describe the manners and customs of that land over there, but you

seem to be possessed with one tremendous fact. What is it?"

"We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him."

Now mark you, here is a man standing on earth, and casting a gleam of light from his search-light out into eternity and he says, "There is one thing I know, that when Jesus appears, we shall be like him."

"Why, then, John, where did you get that conception that there is one thing you are sure of, that you will succeed in reaching the moral likeness of Jesus Christ?"

I think John would have answered: "That is not only the hope of the future, but the richest heritage of the past. You ask me what was the greatest thing Jesus did for us in those three years? It was that he helped us somewhat to grow into his likeness. Two-score years have passed. As I walked with a vision that the world could not see filling my soul, as I have communed with him in hours of night and hours of danger, he has enabled me, more and more to cease to be the man I used to be and to become more and more the man he wants me to be. He has helped me to become somewhat the kind of man he is. I argue from what grace has done to what grace will do, and I know that in the glory beyond, he will complete the work he has begun, transforming us into the likeness of his own moral and spiritual nature."

Do you see how much John reached after when he

wrote these words? I don't believe it lies within the ken of God to offer man anything better than that. I would rather have the character of Christ than his throne. I would rather have the disposition of the Lord Jesus than to have anything else that lies within the power of his gift. When John pointed to that, he pointed to the greatest thing God could do for man, to the uttermost, highest, best, last, most glorious gift.

The hall-mark of every true Christian ought to be a patient and unceasing desire to be like Christ. It ought to be so strong that we would think nothing else mattered with this. In the ups and downs of fortune, whether our friends are loyal or not, whether we are understood or misunderstood, all the lights and shadows, all these things, important as they are for discipline, are not the real thing. They are only life's trimmings after all. If you want to go after the thing for which Jesus came, the thing which is the core and goal and meaning of human history, here it is, that we were made that we might grow into the likeness of the Lord Jesus. Anything else is not success. If you don't, by God's grace, achieve that, don't tell me anything of your other successes. If you are able to say, " Dear Lord, I believe you are making me more loving, more pure, more forgiving, more kind, more full of faith, more full of patience "—if you can say that, then you can laugh at the rest of them. Through all eternity, there is one thing we shall know, and God will

know, and the rest of the universe will know, whether we grew like Jesus or unlike him.

Oh, what an Easter hope! An old man in the evening of life, scarred with the battles he had been through, writing to his beloved children in the church and saying to them, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know"—then bringing out this tremendous thing that has never been surpassed, "*We know that we shall be like him.*"

4. I have just one more thing to call your attention to and that is this: *What effect has that hope in the hearts of those who profess it?* A man can profess anything. It is awful, the use we make of language. I saw a whole page in a Los Angeles paper this week, using Jesus Christ and the Easter hope to boom a piece of real estate. Man will profess anything. What effect has this hope on those who possess it? If I really believe, if that is the pole-star of my life, that some day I shall stand beside Jesus with every trace of meanness and yellowness purged away, when my whole heart shall so attune to him that I become like him, what effect will that have on my present life? Some one says, "Man's present life determines his future."

That is the way God makes the universe, but turn it around and look at it the other way. Does a man's view of the future determine his present life? Yes, more than anything else. We are affected more by what we think of the future than by anything else. The believing Christian is anchored both backward and

forward to Jesus Christ. We say, "We love him because he first loved us." That is drawing your inspiration from the past. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." That is drawing your hope from the future.

It was on a Northwestern prairie. A farmer was out some miles from home with a team of oxen. There came on a snow-storm. It grew into a blizzard. It grew so thick that he could not see the horns of his oxen. He trusted to the instinct of those poor brutes for he could not see the road. They pushed on. But with fatigue and the weight of the snow, at last one of them stopped and lay down. The farmer used the whip. It was hard to do, but it was the merciful thing after all. Then the other lay down, and again he used the whip. Two and three times they did it, and he used the goad. All at once he heard that peculiar sound. There is no use imitating it. It can't be done, but those who have heard it, know it—that peculiar, lowing sound, and all at once they started on, not as if being pushed from behind, but as if they were being pulled from ahead. Through the storm he saw a gleam of light. The oxen had seen it first, and they pushed on. If the gleam of something ahead can grip the heart of a poor, dumb animal, "That nourishes," as Tennyson says, "a blind light within the brain," then what a grip can the immortal hope of the resurrection and the hope beyond take upon the hearts of men and women who are created in the image of God?

A young man went away from home. He was betrothed to a beautiful girl. He said, "I will come back." It was not in the day of the telegraph. "I will come back"—but a year went by and he did not come, and then a second year went by, and he did not come. She was a very attractive girl, and friends began to whisper that it was a shame to wait. He may not come. Why not marry some one else? Her answer was always the same: "He may come back."

At last her mother said, "I don't believe it is right for you to waste your life waiting for one who may never come." Her answer was, "Mother, I will wait a hundred years." At last he walked in, and how happy he was to find her waiting for him. The lure of a hope.

Now, dear friends, a man may *say*—you notice in the New Testament how that is used?—a man may say: "I believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. I believe that he has gone to prepare a place for me. I believe that I shall stand beside him in the white glory of God and shall be owned as his brother." A man may *say* that, and then turn around and live like a common worm, but he can't *believe* it and turn around and live like a common worm. He can't really expect it, and then turn around and live as if he were living just for the passing hour.

The pull of the resurrection hope! I don't believe it would be possible to overstate the pull of the resurrection hope. Two hundred and forty thousand miles

from this earth is a great orb we call the moon. We don't know how the moon does it, but it lays hold of the ocean and lifts hundreds of millions of tons of water right up, and then as it swings to the other side, it takes up other masses of water and lifts them up. If the moon, 240,000 miles away, can do that, then I ask, what kind of a pull can the Son of God have upon those who love him?

The test of the value of Easter is how much of the Easter spirit and message gets into our lives permanently. Let us resolve: "I will walk this year in company of the risen Christ. I will seek more and more to know what it means to grow like him, and I will ask him that the pull of the future may be so mighty in my life that it will break the back of everything mean and low, and enable me so to 'bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body,' as Paul said."

Let us pray:

Master, we cannot see thee with these eyes. That matters not. We cannot touch thee with these hands. That matters not. Thou art more real than anything we can see or touch. Thou hast given to us a deathless hope. Nothing can touch it; nothing can mar it. Thou hast said that when thou shalt appear, we shall be like thee. It is as if we gazed into thy face. What we are asking this morning is that this Easter hope may grip us as a practical, working power, and when

we are brought face to face with the work of tomorrow, help us to bring this spirit to bear upon it and to live with the Easter hope and Easter life so that when we pass over to be with thee, it will be easy to grow like thee.

To those who are in sorrow, come with thy comfort. To any one who has wandered away, come with thy wooing note of love and win him back. Teach us that the true home of the soul is with thee, and that it is easy to be at home with thee. Help those who are tempted to be more than conquerors through thee who hast loved them. This we ask, in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

IV

WORSHIPING GOD REASONABLY

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?

—*Isaiah 1: 11.*

WORSHIPING GOD REASONABLY

From a literal point of view, as well as from the point of view of the highest ideals in spiritual things, the book of Isaiah is the greatest production of the human spirit until the time Jesus came. Isaiah was a prophet in Israel for half a century. His ministry stretched over four reigns. Tradition has it that he was of royal blood. This may or may not have been true. The tinsel of earthly royalty would add nothing to a spirit so fine. We are quite ready to believe that he came of an ancestry worth while, for "blood is a very peculiar sort of juice."

The death of Uzziah seemed to be the event that brought the young man out. The chapters of his book may not have been written exactly in the order in which they appear. We will leave that to the literary critic. In any case, they are like the sayings of Jesus in that you can displace or misplace them as much as you want, and they lose not a whit of their ancient glory. The first chapter is a gem, whether it is really the introduction or whether it was an epilogue placed here at the beginning for convenience. It is a fiery arraignment of his own people, coupled with a tender, pleading love. Here is one that speaks, as with eyes of a flame of fire. Here is one who, at the same time, more nearly than any Old Testament prophet,

anticipates the prayer of Jesus at the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Please note that his arraignment is corporate. It is an arraignment of the whole nation as a nation. How his words burn! "Sinful nation; pride of evil doers; spurners of God." The paragraph ends with "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a handful of survivors, we should become as Sodom. We should have resembled Gomorrah." This is a sentence. Sodom and Gomorrah and their fate represented to Israel the darkest kind of sin and the most lurid kind of judgment that the ancient world knew. When a preacher referred to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah he was not thinking of ordinary measures of sin or ordinary measures of judgment at all, and yet our writer begins the next paragraph with "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah." Please note that in passing from one paragraph to the next he passes from comparing them with Sodom and Gomorrah to practically calling them a new Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet these words were written by a man whose heart melted with tender love, and who believed fully in the forgiving grace of God.

We come now to the phrase which is the center of this chapter, the center of the reasoning of this chapter: "To what purpose" or, as it is rendered in a modern version, "Of what use is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me." What Isaiah was insisting upon was that *the service of God* was not immolation,

but *intelligent service rendered by intelligent men to a reasonable and supremely intelligent God.* In other words, that worship without intelligence was mockery and was nothing but the devil's opium draft to drug souls to sleep in sin, imagining they were serving God. A little later in the paragraph he asks, " Who demands this of you, the trampling of my courts? " His accusation was that they mixed the worst kind of sin with churchgoing and did so with a smug, easy conscience. Note the expressions on behalf of God which he uses, " I am sated "; " I take no delight "; " I cannot endure "; " Your appointed seasons I hate "; " I will not listen." It is the revolt of God against senseless worship served up with sin.

Now he calls for a tremendous national repentance. Nobody could mistake the meaning of his words: " Put away the evil of your doing "; " Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice; restrain the oppressor; uphold the rights of the fatherless; defend the case of the widow." This last sentence makes us think of the Epistle of James.

And now, having shown them what to do, *it was not like Isaiah to leave them without a good sure hope.* He adds, " Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord." Literally he is saying, " Come and let us bring our reasoning to the conclusion." What is the conclusion when a sinful man comes reasonably with frankness and faith to such an one as God, acknowledges his sin, and is ready to forsake it?

Listen to the glorious answer, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This is the reasoning of divine grace. This is the conclusion of God's argument with the human soul by way of the cross of Jesus Christ. It means that Isaiah was saying to them, what the evangelistic preacher of all the ages has said: "You do not need to remain the kind of folks you are. You do not need to continue the things that you now do. You have done the best you can to commit spiritual suicide. You are undone. There is no help in yourself. You can find the way out. There is but one way out—that is through God." Man's extremity of sin, weakness and helplessness is God's opportunity of power and grace. It means that, starting where we will, if the soul or the nation faces the sunrise and is ready now to receive the Lord whom God gave, he has ample power to take what is, both in the individual and in the community, and make what ought to be.

This is the meaning of Christ's errand in this world, to make the desert blossom like a rose and make the unclean clean, to make the unholy holy, to make the inefficient efficient, to make the weak strong, to make the dead live. For this he came. His earthly ministry was strong with this kind of blessing. Every place he walked the river began to flow, but the best of all is that Jesus is not a figure of ancient history. He is our eternal, living contemporary. Everything

that man ever found in Jesus Christ is in him now. All the help he ever was to human beings, he is now; and the man or the nation that squares around, face to face with him, and wants to know the truth and to live the truth, will find him saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Our humanity will never need another Saviour. All we need is the eternal rediscovery, appropriation, and experience of the Saviour we have.

V

A THANKSGIVING SERMON

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things which had been made, that those things which cannot be shaken might remain.

—Hebrews 12: 27.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON

I do not promise to stick very closely to this text. We may use it as a kind of filling-station where we run in once in a while. We are living today in a very mussed-up world. I remember, as a lad of twenty, sojourning on the south shore of Nova Scotia in company with an old sailor. I was ten miles back from the shore in the woods. For forty-eight hours there had raged on the Atlantic a tremendous storm. Caught in the play of waves that pitched mountain-high, vessels had been wrecked. The storm, however, had died down, bright sunshine and beautiful calm succeeded; and yet, way back yonder in the forest, we could hear the steady boom, boom, boom of the surf. I asked my old sailor friend what it meant. He said, "That is the sea running high on the shore." "But," I answered, "the storm died down twelve hours ago." "Yes, but the sea has not quieted yet." I had never heard anything at that time so majestic. I remembered what John said of his apocalyptic vision when he came to describe the voice of the Lord, "Like the sound of many waters."

The biggest human storm that this world ever experienced ended ten years ago. We call it the "World War." More than three-quarters of the inhabitants of earth were directly involved. More men under arms

than had ever been under arms before. Debts piled up so that the mind is staggered in trying to compute them. Old boundary-lines of nations were swept away, and new boundary-lines took their place. Thrones were overturned, dynasties destroyed. Republics arose in the place of kingdoms. The storm was tremendous, and ten years after the last gun was fired, we are still rocking in the trough of the sea.

Now, if any person in the world has a right to be an internationalist, to have a world-view of things, it is a Christian. It is not only his privilege, it is his sacred and solemn duty. Jesus Christ was the first internationalist—the first man who thought in world terms and on a scale ages long. Next after him came his greatest disciple, Paul, the tent-maker of Tarsus. He was an internationalist indeed. Had it not been for him Christianity might easily have become simply a Jewish sect. He lifted it from the narrow flower-pot of Judaism and set it in the open plain of the world, where it might grow and all mankind might rest beneath its branching shadow. The moment we learn to believe that Christ is the Saviour of the world, that he died for all men; that the mighty sweep of God's purpose of life takes in the last man on the last far-flung island of the sea; that the kingdom of God is without any frontier—that moment we begin to be internationalists in the truest sense of the word.

If I were asked today to point out the finest group of true internationalists in the world, I should imme-

diately point to the army of foreign missionaries, whose business it is to share the best that the Church of Christ has in the lands where it is vigorous, with all the people in lands where the Church of Christ has not yet been planted and indeed his flag is just now coming to be unfurled.

May I ask you for a moment to come on, not exactly an aeroplane voyage, we shall go faster than that—but on a little circuit of ours and see the tremendous happenings of our own day. Yonder across the Pacific lies Japan—fifty odd millions, virile, alert, industrious, ambitious, determined, imitative, independent people. In two generations they have jumped from a nobody nation to one reckoned as of the big five in the military and naval powers of the world. Japan's relation with us is not quite what it was a little while ago, and we, ourselves, are to blame. We offered an unnecessary and senseless insult to a high-strung nation, and the pity of it is that the movement to do this started here in our own California. I will not stop to go into particulars, but I will ask all of you thoughtful people to meditate for a moment on how the United States of America would have behaved if the shoe had been on the other foot—if such an insult had been offered to the United States of America. I do not believe for a single moment that Uncle Sam would have behaved with the courtesy, dignity, and good sense that Japan has shown in this great crisis. Oh, it will pass, but we have something to live down, something that cannot

be talked down but will have to be lived down by square, honest, respectful dealing.

Pass for a moment to China—one-quarter of the human race on a great fertile area. A nation that has a record of having the same stable government for the longest, continuous time of any nation in human history, now a republic in form and slowly learning what it means to be a republic. China—awakening to nationality—that is the meaning of the tremendous doings over there. The leaders of China are saying, "The day is done for China to be exploited, bullied, trampled on by Western nations," and depend upon it, with China organized as she is today she never will sleep again. Our grandchildren will see China one of the mightiest forces in the world. We are greatly troubled over the harm done to our mission property and the exclusion of our missionaries from a large part of China. This is only part of the determined movement of China to take charge of her own house, and the missionary societies are sharing part of the penalty for sins of which they were not guilty at all, the sins of Western nations in dealing with China in the days of her helplessness.

India—three hundred twenty-five closely packed millions, with her problem of caste, with her superbly educated class at the top, and her disinherited millions hardly living a human life at the bottom; a part of the British Empire—awakening and restless. What India is saying is this: "Britain has done much for us. She

has given the best and most suitable government that we may ever have, but self-government is better than good government. We do not care to be tied to the apron-strings of an empire centering in an island on the other side of the globe. We want a chance to make our own mistakes and learn by them as other nations have." In response to this demand the British Government is very wisely yielding point by point. The likelihood is that India will stay in the British Empire and become a self-governing dominion like Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

Turkey—the core of the former great, loosely built, Turkish Empire, now consolidated under the leadership of a military dictator and really making a marvelous history. The Church separated from the State after the closest union between Church and State that this earth has ever known since the seventh century. Turkey gradually earning, in spite of her past bad record, the respect of the nations of Europe.

Russia—one-sixth of the land surface of the globe and one-twelfth of its people—going in a few brief months from an absolute czarism to the extreme of democracy, yet governed by an oligarchy which, under the guise of ultrademocratic forms really out-Jesuits the Jesuits in their most tyrannical days in its government of Russia's millions; but we believe that Russia will right herself. There is a physical strength, an idealism, and an industry in her people that argues well for the big future.

Britain—much in the same position as a big industrial company curtailing for the time, and with a large number of her employees idle. Very serious days, and yet we believe Britain means too much to the Kingdom of God in a hundred ways for this to be the end, or even the beginning of the end, of her far-flung empire.

Italy—finding herself a short time ago face to face with the alternative of Communism or a dictator, chose a dictator, and he is one who dictates. In an evening company of *literati* in England, among whom was grim, old Thomas Carlisle, a lady expressed her creed thus, "I accept the universe." Carlisle took his pipe from his mouth and replied, "Gad, she'd better." It is thus in Italy today. Everybody at work, law and order prevailing, but any one who goes there had better obey Mussolini. It cannot last. Dictatorships never do. What next? It is almost anybody's guess.

Let us cross the Atlantic! To the south of us lie twenty-two Latin American republics. Perhaps the foremost thing in their conscience is suspicion of us. We have earned it. We call ourselves "the big brother" and they look upon us as the imperialistic big boss. It is here as it is in Japan; we have been misrepresented by those who have gone there as government officials or as business men to such an extent that in their minds Uncle Sam is a greedy, grasping minister, covering his greed with hypocritical pretenses of friendship. We might just as well look the matter

in the face—we are not as bad as Latin America sees us, neither are we as good as we see ourselves.

Now, after this hasty, hop-skip and a jump review, let us come home. Here we are, one hundred ten millions, the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world. There is almost nothing that lies within the grasp of the nation that we cannot do. We owe nobody and all the world owes us, billions upon billions. So much of the world's gold accumulated in our vaults that it is positively an embarrassment. Resourceful, with resources uncounted. Virile, alert, aggressive, yet essentially peaceful.

During the War, I, with a few other Americans, was for a day or two the guest of a man who shall be nameless. You may judge of his measure by the fact that he was the Chairman of the Munitions Board of the British Empire during the War. He talked with us in the frankest and friendliest way. We found he knew more about America than all of us put together. He knew every coal-mine, and every iron-mine in this country and their possible output. He knew every munition factory and its capacity. The industrial map of the United States was before his mind's eye as plainly as A, B, C. During one hour of that day, in a facetious mood, he gave us an imitation of the average, well-to-do American traveling abroad. It certainly did not add to our conceit. The sad thing about it was that it was so true, it fitted, we recognized him by it.

Let me be serious. The question for America on this Thanksgiving Day is, "Shall our position of wealth and power elate us or create a deep and humble sense of responsibility before God?" This nation may well ask itself, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Vast and productive continent, did you create that, or was it the gift of God? A virile people —the culmination of all creation! Is that our creation or something created in the province of God? A healthy climate in the very zone where great civilizations have always flourished! Is that our creation or the gift of God? "What hast thou that thou didst not receive, and if thou didst receive it, why gloriest thou as if thou hadst not received it?" America's prosperity should drive us to our knees and especially should make the Christian church of America serious.

A great change has come over the missionary enterprises of the world. America and Great Britain constitute the two great power-houses of these missionary enterprises. The change is this: Whereas, formerly our missionaries went with the idea that all heathen religions were bad, wholly and only bad, we go now with the firm persuasion that no faith has commanded the great numbers of mankind that did not contain much truth. There is much that is true and beautiful in Buddhism, in Mohammedanism. What we are trying ing to do now is to share what Christ has given us with the rest of the world. It is true that alongside of much that is good in the great ethnic faiths of the

world, there is much that is evil and much that is figurative. It is true that Christ is given as the world's final religion, and we stand in the tremendous place of those to whom something has been entrusted for the human race.

Oh, for a twofold resolve! First, on the part of the American nation, that our relationship with the other nations in diplomacy and in trade shall be so high-grade, honest, fair, that it shall lift the average of the world's dealings. And then, a resolve on the part of the Christian church in America that we shall not rest until the last man in the last country has had at least a chance to share in the unspeakable gift which God has bestowed upon us as his trustees for the world through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

VI

THE MAP OF EVERY MAN'S LIFE

You are the light of the world.

—Matthew 5: 14.

THE MAP OF EVERY MAN'S LIFE

I am going to try to talk about three chapters in Matthew, the 5th, 6th and 7th, of what we know as the Sermon on the Mount. I was going to say I would condense these chapters. No, you cannot condense anything Jesus said. Emerson refers to his utterances as "Gems, five words long, upon the stretched forefinger of all time."

The trouble with most people is not that they have a wrong philosophy of life, but that they haven't any at all. It is not that they have drawn out a sketch-map of life that is erroneous, but that they have not drawn out any. They are just living because they are here, yielding to the impulse that makes the strongest pull, whether it happens to be the best or not.

I turn to the superman of all the ages. Did he live that way? Not for a second. He knew where he was going and why he was going that way. He lived by an inward principle. His was a glorious, self-directing life. The trend of his inner life was not that of a creature of circumstances. At all times he was a loyal son of God. He knew what his Father wanted him to do, and he took that course at any cost. He has done a great thing for us. He has not only shown us how he lived, but sketched out a map of life for us common men and women, and we have it in outline in

the Sermon on the Mount. Meanwhile, Jesus can afford to wait. Oh, men wrangle and fuss, and they try this way and that way, and it looks as if Lowell's description was true:

> Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

He can afford to wait because he knows that our human race will have to come round to his way of thinking at last.

Glance at this map of life. I borrow those words from Lecky, who wrote a book called *The Map of Life*. Lecky was a member of the British Parliament. I am going to ask you to look at Jesus' map of life for common men and women. He begins by laying emphasis upon your inner character and mine, and he goes so far as to make us understand that happiness does not consist in what a man has, but in what he is. *Character, first of all.* Anything that is not built on divine and righteous character is doomed to the scrap-heap of the ages. Look at the eight beatitudes. They are a kind of octave of divine grace. There are three outstanding things in a righteous character as Jesus describes it. These are: humility, mercy, and a passion for righteousness. Humility toward God and our fellow men; mercy toward those who need mercy; and a passion for righteousness. Look at those eight, and you get Christ's idea of an ideal character.

"Master, if I succeed even imperfectly in being the kind of a man you describe, what kind of an influence will I exert?"

"You will be a light to the rest of the world, and you will be like salt to save the rest of the community from decay."

Notice those two figures. They are both things that cannot be changed. When the sun rises, it does not change the landscape, but it shows people what is there. Jesus says the kind of people he is describing will be a light to the rest of the world. Look at the other figure. You have some food. Just add the sufficient amount of salt and, instead of decay going on, you have a certain amount of preservation. The Master says, "My best gift to the world is men and women who will be lights to the rest of mankind and who, by virtue of their own life, will save the rest of the community from decay."

Jesus lived in an age when men rushed and broke their necks to get things, and the supreme citizen of the world had not anything. The man who looms above all the kings and all the multimillionaires of the earth lived and died a man who possessed nothing but his own character, but in possessing his own character he possessed the thing that is the standard of all the ages. He is saying: "Character first! Make that supreme, and, if you do, you will be the kind of a person who will be a light to the rest of the world and salt to save the community from decay."

Now, I come to the third sketch. Jesus was preaching to religious men and women who had a very ancient religion and believed in it very profoundly. How will Jesus treat this ancient religion? He treats it reverently. He tells them to be careful to preserve everything that is in it, but he criticizes the ancient religion by going one better. Does he say, "Throw over these ancient laws"? No, but he reads into them a meaning they never had before. Let me illustrate what he says. "It has been said, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Am I going to find fault with that ancient law? No! I will go it one better. Instead of trying to hurt and kill your neighbor, you are to go far in the other direction. That is, if you are coming into the House of the Lord, and you happen to remember that you have a difference with your brother, go away first and fix it up, and then come back." The Master takes that old, ancient law and reads into it a meaning that no Moses ever dreamed of.

He says, "It has been said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.'" He does not throw it into the waste-basket. No! What it means is the cleansing of the last inner thought and imagination of your mind so that you will not wish for, or long for, anything that will not pass muster before the Lord God.

He says, "It has been written, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.'" That was the old idea. Let their God take care of them, and our God will care for us. What does Jesus say? "If you will only love your

friends, what reward have you? Do not even sinners do the same?" He ends that great paragraph with an awful sentence. There is nothing in the Ten Commandments that compares with this: "Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." I beg you to notice, he was not talking about being perfect in knowledge or perfect in power. He was talking about being perfect in good-will, in love. He set no lower standard for us. You are to live by the law of the heart of God and to cultivate the same regard for all men that the loving God cultivates. Oh, Master, you are a little ahead of your age. Yes, and he is a little ahead of our age. Jesus Christ is the only man who ever spoke who can lay down the last word, and he is sketching for us the map of life. Character first, and character breeds influence and relationship to the world. He was talking to the ancient Christian church, and he could say the same about the pagan people. Preserve all that is good in them, and then lift them up so that they will be living by the same rule that God lives by.

Let me hurry to the second chapter, Matthew 6. *The theme is pure motives.* It has a single idea, integrity of motive. He applies it first to almsgiving, then to prayer, and then to fasting.

Almsgiving: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." Master, for whose eyes shall I do it? "For God's eyes!"

Prayer: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Whose ears shall I do it for? "For your Father who is in heaven."

Fasting: "Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

Property: This is the keenest test God will ever give you. When you come to the use of property, use it seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Always remember that property is a means to an end, and that end is something very much higher and very much more lasting than

property, namely, the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Oh, a number of people have tried to read nonsense into the words of Christ. If we could just take the Oriental mind and words and read them with a little sense! What the Master is saying is, "While you are in this world it is necessary for you to use some of this world's goods; that property is a means to an end, and if you use it as a means to an end, he will tell you what the end is. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

In an editorial the other day, I read this: "We have seen Mr. Carnegie make his millions, and then we have watched what he would think those millions were for, and he took them and put them where he thought they would benefit mankind most. We have seen Mr. Rockefeller make his millions, and we have watched what he would think those millions were for, and he used them for the alleviation of suffering, physically, mentally, and spiritually, around the world. We have seen Mr. Ford make his millions, and the whole world is waiting to see what Mr. Ford will think of those millions. The real test of Henry Ford's character has not come yet. Twenty-seven years ago he was glad to borrow fifty dollars to get the first Ford made, and now he handles millions. We will wait to see what he will think of them." The living God will wait to see what we think twenty-five dollars a week is really for and what use we will make of it.

What have we in this second chapter? Purity of

motive in your almsgiving, in your prayers, in your fasting, in your use of property. What does it mean? It means that what Jesus Christ asks is purity of motive in everything. A man cannot go beyond that. To be absolutely pure in your motive—that is the last word. That is doing things the way the Lord did. Here Jesus gives the gem of all the gems of prayer that were ever given. You can read it in a minute and a half, and yet it practically covers the whole of life.

Turn to the third chapter of the Sermon. Two things he puts in here, two big things. The first thing is, *Jesus knew the tendency of the human heart to criticise,* and he knew that when a man tries to be good, the first thing he will do is to criticise another man who is not quite so good. This is the peculiar fault of the saints. A sinner will not care what you do. The Master says criticism is a good thing, but remember there is only one person you are allowed to criticise and that is the person who wears your hat and coat, else, he says—and there is a fine touch of humor here—you will find yourself in the position of the man who tried to remove a splinter from his neighbor's eye when he had a plank, a great stick of timber, in his own eye. He adds, "After you have taken the plank out of your own eye, perhaps you can help your brother to take the splinter out, but be sure to begin with the right man."

Then the Master moves forward to his climax. I

am amazed at the magnificent originality of Jesus. Nothing else will do except the devotion of your whole life, without reserve, to this supreme object, *the doing of the Father's will.* Then he draws a picture, a picture that has passed into all literature. Men who never read the Bible use the phrase. They do not know that the Master Mind of the ages coined that into literature. The Master says: "Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Such a person is like a man who built his house on the quicksand down by the river, but the winds came, and blew upon that house, and it fell, for it was built on the sand. But "he who heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them," that man, the Lord Jesus says, is building on a rock. He means that you are building something that will stand the test of eternity. Master, what is this you are saying to us? You are saying that nothing can be a substitute for honest, thorough obedience, taking the words of Christ and applying them to my own life, and making them the rule of life.

No such sermon has ever been printed. None such has ever been written. None such ever spoken. There

is nothing like it. It is a complete map of life drawn by the Master's hand. I have heard people say they tremble when they stand up before the Ten Commandments, but I tremble more when I stand before the Sermon on the Mount. How shall I measure up to that? Master, you have set a standard my heart approves, my conscience says is right; but how can I, a worm of the earth, tied down by heredity and by many things within, reach this standard? Nobody can rise to it, and nobody can rise toward it, except with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew there was only one means by which men could live that way, and that was by the superlative grace of God. He tells us that we are "the light of the world," but in John he says, "I am the light of the world." The kind of influence I expect you to send out, I begin by sending out to you. I sit in the reception-room of everlasting mercy. My resources are measureless. I have strength for your weakness, purity for your impurity, straightening out for your crookedness, rest for your burden. Come unto me, and I will breathe into you the same spirit that I breathe, and I will make the impossible possible, and you will arise and say, "I can."

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust," especially when grandeur comes in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, so nigh is that grandeur to our dust,

> When duty whispers low, *Thou must,*
> The youth replies, *I can.*

So he closes by recommending the grace of Christ. Once I heard a rough old preacher use language that struck home with me: "If anybody is going to work for Jesus, the first thing they should do is to see the boss." If anybody is going to work for Jesus, the first thing he needs is a personal interview, and thus you come into that secret of grace that will cause every effort you make toward righteousness to grow until you will not be satisfied with anything except to be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Isn't this difficult? Yes, but it is worth it. It is worth a man's while to come into the fulness of the life Christ gives and become a part of the forces that are building a kingdom that will last forever.

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VII

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?
—Acts 19: 2.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, second verse, I read a rather startling question, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

In talking to you about what I conceive to be some of the truth about the Holy Spirit, I want to avoid two things. When I read about the Holy Spirit, I take down a big, theological volume, and before I get through, the writer, who seems to be a very learned man, has the business so involved that I suspect he is using phrases and words which he does not clearly understand and which I do not understand at all. Then I go from that volume into a certain kind of meeting, and people are talking about the Holy Spirit, and their talk is so glib and so slick and so simple and so cock-sure—why, they talk as if it was some kind of a Christmas package that God handed out to his favorites. I want to avoid that, and yet I don't want to use language so involved that we cannot understand it.

Whenever you come to deal with the living God, you are dealing with the profoundest mystery in the universe, and you might just as well admit it to your own heart. Let me see if we can get at something in a rather simple and straightforward kind of way.

In the Bible there is a kind of a threeness in the revelation of God. I do find here a great deal about God's fatherhood, and then a great deal more about some one who came from God to this world and is known as the Son, and then a great deal about some person known as the Holy Spirit—a kind of threeness.

I have a little formula which does me good. I hand it to you for what it is worth. I can say this much for it, that it is my own. All there is of God is in the Father; all that was ever seen of God is in the Son; all that was ever felt of God is in the Holy Spirit. That may not be worth anything to you, but it helps me to clarify things in my own mind. All there is of God is in the Father; all that was ever seen of God is in the Son; all that was ever felt of God is in the Holy Spirit. Allow me to turn it around. The Father is God; the Son is God revealed; the Spirit is God in the act of revealing.

That does not clear up the mystery. We are skirting the edge of a great mystery when we try to talk about the Holy Spirit. Does the sun ever visit this earth? No, not any nearer than ninety million miles to my life, and yet there is a sense in which the sun visits this earth every day. We say: "How good the sun feels! How it makes the flowers grow!" There is something comes from the sun to this earth that makes the power of the sun felt, actively, efficiently, right on this earth. There is something like that when I think about the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is

to God as the sunlight is to the sun, and the Spirit of God is that, only coming from the Son of Righteousness, himself, instead of from the natural sun.

A moment ago I said that in the Bible there seems to be a threeness of God in his manifestation. If you want a single place in the Bible where this threeness appears, look at the baptism of Jesus. Come out on the banks of the Jordan. There is a man standing there, a man just as he came out of the river. Who is it? It is the Son of God. There is somebody speaking from the sky in a voice of indescribable majesty, and he is saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Who is that? That is the Father. And then there is somebody coming down from the sky in the form of a dove and resting upon the Son, and his life was never the same afterwards. It made a mighty change, even in the life of Jesus. Here the threeness appears, conspicuously, graphically and, I might say, dramatically.

Is this threeness that is apparent in God only the way it looks to men, or is there a threeness in eternal God himself? In other words, does God only appear to be three persons to men, or does he know himself to be three persons in heaven? I use the word "persons" in this connection because I don't know a better word. Is there a threeness in the eternal consciousness of God to correspond to the threeness which men see in him? Is he three persons in one to himself? I will only answer this: The Christian Church, from the

apostolic age to the present time, has profoundly believed that God is not only three in his apparent manifestation to men but in his consciousness to himself. God is conscious of a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost wrapped up in himself.

Be very careful how you try to separate those three. Where is our best illustration? Right in ourselves. There is only one being in the universe of whom it can be said, "He is made in the image of God." Take our eyes away from God and fix our eyes on ourselves, and see if we can find some hint of the nature of God by our own nature. I talk about "my spirit." You look puzzled and say, "Why, preacher, your spirit is you." Of course. My spirit is I. I wonder if it isn't the same way up there. Is the Spirit of God something else than God, or is it really God, just as much as your spirit is really you? Just as really as the spirit of a man is the man himself, the Spirit of God is God, himself, so when I am talking about the Holy Spirit, I am not talking about some one away out on the fringe of the Godhead, but about God in one of his manifestations.

Now, let me turn to the place where I think we will get as much light as anywhere—the last night of Jesus' human life. What a focus in human history that was! The fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John is the place where the New Testament first wears out. In my mother's Bible that was the place where the thumbmarks showed first, and

before five years that part had to be discarded. That is the holy of holies of human history, that last night. God built the ages toward that night. Jesus had lived on earth a third of a century. Now he was through. There was only one thing left to do. That was to die on the cross, be buried for three days, and rise from the dead. On that last night he gathered that little band together. Oh, he didn't preach to them, not at all. They asked questions, and he answered. I have read those four chapters through a thousand times, and if I live I expect to read them a thousand times more. The Master led them along in the truth, and it was great enough to leave them trembling with bewilderment. "It is better for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

May I ask you to notice two things. Previous to this in the Bible the Holy Spirit was spoken of as "it," but Jesus changed the pronoun and spoke of the Holy Spirit as "he." He didn't contradict anything that went before. When Jesus was telling something of everlasting importance, he said "he."

Second: He called him the "Comforter." Now, don't misunderstand the word. You might think that the "Comforter" was one who went around and made people comfortable. No! Classic literature tells us of a certain Greek admiral who went from one tent to another comforting his men. Was he making them comfortable, or giving them a pat on the shoulder?

No! He was putting iron in their blood, giving them some of his own strength and courage. That is the sense in which the word " Comforter " is used.

Keep these two things in mind, that he used the personal pronoun " he," but in addition he called the Spirit the " Comforter."

Now, I want to get at something. It is this astounding statement. The Lord Jesus not only said the Holy Spirit would be sent from the Father, but he said, "*I* will send him to you," and he not only gave them to understand that the Spirit would be the Spirit of the Father, but "*my*" Spirit. What is the difference? Now wait a minute. Sometimes it makes considerable difference when a beam of light comes to you, what kind of a window it comes through. Previous to this, Jesus had given his Spirit to many people, and it was the naked, unclothed Spirit of God. God is going to give his Spirit to men in a different way now, not simply as the Spirit of God, but as the Spirit of the glorified God in Jesus Christ. Remember, you have something in Jesus Christ more than man. Jesus Christ is the most marvelous combination in the universe. He is a redeemed man and a glorified man, but here you have God revealed to man. The Holy Spirit that is given to believers now is not simply the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God in Christ and through Christ, and coming to us as the spirit of the tender, beautiful, majestic, and glorified man, Jesus.

Somebody says, " I don't see any difference." I take

a man aside, and I say, "Where did you get your first conception of God?" "From my mother," he answers. "I don't remember what she said, but my first conception of God's kindness was the way my mother treated me when I was bad." What the child felt was not simply the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God percolating through the beautiful spirit of the mother. What comes to us now? Not simply the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of God coming through the human, divine Christ, the friend of man, the loving Saviour, and at the same time our Maker and Master and Lord. If you don't see anything in that, take it home and mull it over. It is a great thing for God to give his Spirit to man, but what a thing it is to get it through some one that man can understand, through the glorified Christ, who is God manifested in man, and man raised to the right hand of God as the glorified God himself. He is more to you and to me than he could be simply as the Spirit of God.

There are two questions I want to ask: *How can the Spirit of God deal with me, and what can he do for me?* Let me take a scripture which I am very fond of using as an illustration. If photography had been in existence, I should have suspected the writer of borrowing his illustration from photography, but it was not in existence then. Here it is: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

If you want the interpretation of that, listen to the next verse: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Now come with me into the photographer's gallery. You are all fixed up nice. You have your best dress on. You give your nose one more powder and go into the gallery. The photographer says, "Sit down here." The photographer is over there. He has his camera ready. Inside it is a carefully sensitized plate. You are here, the camera is there; but there is no picture. How is your picture going to be put out there where we can see it? There is a big shining orb out there ninety-five millions of miles away. At a certain point the photographer tells you to "Look pleasant, please." Then he presses a bulb and exposes the plate. How long? Only an instant. "That is all. Thank you. Call on Tuesday." What happened in that fraction of a second? A whole lot happened in that fraction of a second. There is not a scientist in the world who can explain it. A beam of light from a sun ninety-five million miles away was reflected from your face into that sensitized plate and behold, when he hands you that picture, you say, "That is a good likeness," and your friends say, "My! my! that just looks as if you could speak."

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ," and " But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When you do business face to face with Jesus Christ, not when you mumble some words in a hymn with your thoughts flying all over creation, but when you do business with Jesus Christ face to face, just as the light carried your picture and imprinted it on that highly sensitized plate, so Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, has the power to change the inmost temper of your life. Please notice those two words—" inmost temper." Jesus Christ does no superficial work. You cannot change the nature of a Bengal tiger by manicuring his toe-nails. God cannot change the nature of a sinner by giving him a slick-up on the outside. God knows that what we need is a change in the inmost temper of our lives, a change so real, so radical, so pervasive, that no language can describe it.

" Simon Peter, I should like to have a talk with you. You seem to have undergone a change. When you were by the Sea of Galilee, you were a cursing roughneck. You must have been a pretty bad one when, after you had been with the Master three years, you could swear and lie. You still have the Galilean brogue. Any one would know where you came from. You are not a Beau Brummel, even now. You are not even a Beau Brummel in the Christian life. You are a diamond in the rough. Even yet you sometimes break over and do things you ought not to, but, oh my,

you are a different man! The kindness, the gentleness of your life! Simon Peter, how did this change come about?" And Simon Peter answers: "The only thing I know is that I know him, and he is the workman that has been doing something in here."

"John, we would like to have a talk with you. You were an intolerant rascal! Remember, when you came to a certain Samaritan village, and they turned up their noses at you, what you wanted to do?" John said, "Yes, I would have incinerated the whole bunch." "And John, we look at you now! What a difference! The way you talk!" "Beloved, let us love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." "Why John, it is not simply a matter of education. Somebody or something has changed the inmost temper of your soul. Remember in history, when the people used to look for the philosopher's stone that turned everything to gold? You must have found the philosopher's stone which changed the inmost temper of your feeling and thinking."

I have met a few men and women concerning whom I could say, it was a liberal education in the things of Christ to be in their company, even if they didn't speak a word. You could touch them any time of the day or night, and you would find that you had touched one of God's thoroughbreds. They had been beholding as in a mirror the light flashed forth by the glory of the Lord, they lived in the light of Christ, and they had

been transformed. That is what the Spirit of God does.

Take you away from God, separate you from God, what are you? You are a waif; you are a bit of human driftwood, and a helpless bit of driftwood at that; you are buffeted by temptation; you are liable to run into trouble that you don't know anything about. Turn around! Back up against God! God has contracted to be your everlasting backer. Not that he will O. K. everything you do. He has promised something infinitely better than that. I am glad God has not contracted to O. K. everything I do. I would get God into trouble if he did that. All the moral power there is in God, all the beauty there is in God, and all the glory of the divine nature is for you, and you can draw on him for that which you need to change the inmost temper of your life, because when he gives you Jesus Christ, he gives the whole of himself.

Can't you see that to have Christ dwelling in you is the same as having the Holy Spirit dwell in you? The Holy Spirit never dwells in anybody except as the representative and witness of Jesus Christ.

This is as near as I can get to the core of the truth about Jesus Christ. Have I solved the mystery? No! The moment a man comes to deal with Christ, he is surrounded by mysteries that keep him humble. One of the mysteries is God's everlasting love for you, and that God has revealed himself to you for your salvation in his blessed Son, and that the Holy Spirit is the

intimate revelation of Christ. Beholding as in a mirror the glory of God flashed forth from Jesus Christ, we are changed into the same image.

My last question, and without this I would better not have come at all. We say the Holy Spirit is Christ's greatest gift. Unless we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit from Christ, we should not be able to appreciate any of his gifts at all. All the gifts of Christ came to us baptized in his one great gift. *What attitude, day by day, shall I as a man take toward Jesus Christ* so as to insure that the gift will not pass me by, so as to insure the inshining of the light? What attitude shall I maintain toward him? I am happy to say that here is one place where things are not involved at all. The attitude that a person should take toward Christ is one of the simplest lessons in the Christian life. I don't say one of the easiest. This is very simple, but don't let any one make you think it is very easy. What is the answer? Let me quote some lines from the chorus of a hymn you all know by heart:

> Trust and obey,
> For there's no other way
> To be happy in Jesus,
> But to trust and obey.

Just major on those two words—"Trust and obey." Master, what attitude shall I take toward you? Trust! Take him for all he is, and give him the credit for being real and alive. Obey! That means surrender; and the peculiar thing is that when you begin to sur-

render to Christ, each surrender you make shows you the door to another, and when you have made that, it shows you the door to a deeper surrender.

Let me use this illustration. A minister was stopping at a big farmhouse where they had fifty men out in the field. A wife wanted to drive the minister to town, and she went to her husband and said, "I want a horse and buggy." He replied: "I haven't got a horse that I can give you. I have two, but neither one is fit for a woman to drive. I can't let you have a horse." The wife said: "What do you think of that! Fifteen horses out in the stable, and when I want a horse and buggy, I can't get it. What would you do?" I am sorry to say the minister replied, "I wouldn't stand it." "Yes, you would," replied the lady, "if you had any sense. Listen! When I got married, I made a list of ten things I declared I would not put up with, and I have put up with every one, and I have been a happy wife too."

Another illustration. I perform a marriage ceremony for two young people. They say, "Yes," but they don't know what they have said. I have asked the man sometimes, and he doesn't know what he said, whether he said he would buy things for her or not. They don't know how much they are in for, and nothing but the years to follow can tell them.

Here is a person who says: "I am going to lay all on the altar and trust Christ. All I can do is to surrender to Christ now, and tomorrow will reveal some-

thing that I didn't think about, and then I surrender, and the next day I find something I didn't know before. What shall I do now?" Surrender.

> Trust and obey,
> For there's no other way
> To be happy in Jesus,
> But to trust and obey.

And every surrender you make, you are taking a step further into the heart of Christ, and every surrender you make, you are the gainer and not the loser, and when you are able to give up the whole of yourself, the reward you get is the Holy Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to you.

Go back now to my text. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" It simply means that when you do business truly and honestly with Jesus, you do not need to puzzle your mind about any theory of the Holy Spirit. He will be getting in his work. "If any man hath not his Spirit, he is not of him." The one thing you may be sure of is that you are aware of the Spirit. The bedrock thing is that the Holy Spirit does this supreme thing: he changes, by our union with Christ, the inmost temper of the soul and makes us different people than we would otherwise be.

Master, our words are poor things. We ask thee to interpret thyself to every waiting heart this morning. If we have not made it plain to every waiting heart,

help every one to go to thee, and thou wilt make it plain to him. We do not need to understand all the how of it. When we have yielded ourselves to thee, we can say: "I have anchored my soul. My haven of rest is my Lord." Lord Jesus, help us. Amen.

VIII

WHEN THE COMFORTER CAME TO STAY

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

—Acts 2: 4.

WHEN THE COMFORTER CAME TO STAY

Let us try to put ourselves in the position of those early disciples after the Master went away. There must have been a strong temptation to bewilderment when the cloud closed behind him and they realized that he had gone to heaven, and they found themselves in possession of a blessed memory only. They could repeat to each other his words. They could especially clasp to their hearts his promise that some day he would receive them unto himself, but with him gone, in the face of an indifferent or hostile world with which they were surrounded, it was a test of their faith. One glorious shaft of light relieved the gloom. He had left them a promise that not many days hence they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. He had made it so definite that he had actually commanded the group at Jerusalem not to separate but to wait for the fulfilment of that promise. Try, if you can, to put yourself in one of those prayer-meetings during the ten days of waiting. None of the prayers were recorded. We are only sure that the burden of every prayer was the same: "Lord, we wait on thee for the fulfilment of thy glorious promise." We do not suppose that any of them clearly realized how he would come or what to expect. They only knew that with

all the equipment of education and training, of example and of inspiration, that the Lord Jesus had given them, that with the experience of his peace and the glory of his resurrection behind them, he had still given them to understand that the crowning fitness for the work for which they were preparing was lacking and could be supplied only by the gift of the Holy Spirit. During these days of waiting, they attended to one important detail. They chose by lot a successor to Judas Iscariot.

The day of Pentecost came. They were all assembled in one place. The one hundred twenty are probably as nearly of one mind as it would be possible for one hundred twenty human beings to be. Their purpose is the same; their hope is the same. Suddenly something happened that was quite new in human history. There is no record in any literature of anything comparable to it before. It is described as a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind; an appearance from heaven as of fire, that sat upon each of them; an enthusiasm filling their hearts that burst all bounds and caused them to speak a multitude of languages. Fourteen are mentioned as samples of the many tongues spoken that day and yet all are proclaiming the same thing, the triumph of God in Christ's resurrection. Whatever may be our philosophy of the Trinity, we are certain that the very spirit of the Father and the Son had taken possession of this group in an extraordinary and supernatural way. The promise spoken centuries before and

fondly cherished by devout souls since had at last had fulfilment of splendor and power.

Let us notice now the effect produced by this enduement of the Spirit of God. First, *a clear vision.* Many things must have been fairly clear to these men after three years of acquaintance with Jesus, but now the whole landscape of life was flooded with the fulness of God's light. They saw God revealed in Christ as they had never been aware of him before. They saw themselves as sinners saved by grace, forgiven, regenerated, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ in a sense they had never realized before. They saw the world around them a great harvest-field ripe for the reaper and an inviting field in spite of its opposition. Clearness of vision is one of the first marks of this divine gift.

Second, *they were intensely conscious of the reality of the world of the unseen.* They are looking now not at things temporal but eternal; they are realizing that the things temporal are the shadows; that the things eternal are the realities. Christ at the right hand of God is as real to them as if they could look up through the open sky and see him with the natural eye. The reality of what he had done for men and what he could do for them burst upon them with overwhelming power. Everything else faded into the background in comparison with the realities of the kingdom.

Third, *they became conscious of an intense spiritual life within themselves.* Every power of their being

was quickened. They could not only see with uncommon clearness, but they could feel with deep intensity, and they could will with a strength of determination unknown before. Life was intensified. It was as if from a feeble current that could hardly be felt, a voltage had been turned on so intense that it was a joy to live. These men will make a stir wherever they go. Their light can never be hidden again. They will turn the world upside down. They feel themselves to be the very expression of God. They are ready to shout, "We can because Christ can."

They create a sensation. Jerusalem was filled with the news. A vast host came together, of people from many lands who were there attending the Pentecostal feast. Questions were asked on all sides. Such was their enthusiasm that some of the crowd actually thought they were intoxicated; and then there comes an hour, a moment, when some man is to stand up and proclaim to that vast representative Jewish audience for the first time, in the fulness of the power of Holy Spirit, Christ as the Son of God, crucified, risen, ascended to the Father, the Saviour of men, and to proclaim through him forgiveness for the present, and eternal hope for the future.

Simon Peter, the fisherman, the man who only fifty days before had been driven into a panic and had denied his Lord, is the man chosen by God for this unequaled honor. He preached the Pentecost sermon. He opened the doors of the Kingdom. He ushered

in the first three thousand believers. He started the Church of God on its career of age-long and world-wide conquest. No one can read this story without a quickened pulse and a kindled eye. It is the romance of God's grace in a world of sin. God had been preparing for that hour from the creation. The whole story of revelation in the Old Testament and the richer story of Jesus Christ, his wondrous birth, his holy life, his deeds of power, his words of wisdom, his miracles of love, his sacrificial death, his triumphant resurrection, his ascension to heaven, and the gift of the Spirit poured out from his right hand, were all a preparation for this great harvest hour at the opening of the new dispensation.

We come now to the question that concerns us men of the twentieth century. Was this simply a spurt of grace at one point in human history? Did God build the portico of his house of marble to finish out with common brick? Did he exhaust himself that day? Was this a spring tide never to be repeated? It is our profound conviction that everything that is essential in this experience has remained and is available for a group of believers today as really as in that dawn of the Christian era. Christ is at the right hand of God. His revelation has lost none of its meaning. His death has lost none of its redeeming power. His resurrection has lost none of its assurance. He is as close to your life and mine in America this year as he was to Peter, James, John, and Andrew fifty days after his

crucifixion. What may we expect with certainty that the Spirit will do for me—for my fellows today?

1. I may expect him to give me a vivid, glowing, permanent sense of the reality of Jesus Christ. To have Christ real to you is the first essential for joy and power. No one lives a triumphant Christian life without this. Just as long as Jesus is a shadowy figure on the far horizon of your thoughts, your life will lack point and power; but when he becomes closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet, more real than the friend who sits across the table, the ancient glory has returned.

2. The gift of the Spirit reveals you to yourself. You see your weaknesses, faults, sins, glaringly, but over against them you also see his forgiveness, his redeeming power, the possibilities that you have in yourself. In other words, you see yourself plus Christ, and you see what a man or a woman may become in Christ, which is another matter altogether from what any man or woman may become apart from Christ. The gift of the Spirit is something added, not any new native power given to the soul, but something is added which quickens all the native powers of the soul into new life and enables a human being to fulfil the ends for which God created it. He makes us conscious of the reality of the life of Christ, conscious of the reality of his power, present, active, conscious of your union with him, so that you are able to say, "I can, because God can," or "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth

me." His presence quickens you with a great and serious tenderness toward one's fellows; makes love for men not an empty word, not a mere sentiment, but a driving power that leads one to forgive, to overlook, to believe in one's fellows, and to be ready to spend and be spent that they may come to the fulness of their inheritance as well.

The latest studies in science are opening our eyes to marvelous things. We have learned that there is no such thing as dead matter. The rock beneath your feet, which we supposed was just dead matter pressed closely together, is a hive of intensest living material. The electrons that make up its molecules are moving in their infinitely small circles with a swiftness and vigor which the mind cannot conceive. God is in all this. The universe has become to the thoughtful man of today the garment of God in a new sense. He who said, "The hairs of your head are all numbered," if he were speaking in the language of today, might say, "The electrons of your body are all numbered." Now, the gift of the Holy Spirit is nothing else than the surcharging anew of the whole life of man, body and soul, with the presence and power of the living God. It is voltage from the eternal. Christ living in you.

Facing tomorrow's tasks, I can recommend nothing in human life that can compare with the thing of which I am speaking now. He will not add a single new faculty to your soul for the reason that he did not make a mistake in his original creation. God does not

need to do his work over again. He made you as he wanted you to be. What the Spirit does is to quicken, invigorate, and coordinate all the powers of the soul so that man shall come to his best estate as a servant of God, as a servant of his fellows, and gloriously fulfil the purpose of his creation and redemption.

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all thy quick'ning powers,
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours!

IX

THE MOOD OF PENTECOST

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God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. —*Acts 2: 36.*

THE MOOD OF PENTECOST

Our theme this morning is the "Mood of Pentecost." Nothing is more important in the life of a man or community than the habitual mood of that man or that body. It includes both thinking and feeling. It is your frame of mind. It is you in action. Perhaps we can best estimate the mood of Pentecost by looking at the mood of the disciples a little while before. Their Master had died an ignominious and shameful death. It was the last thing on earth that they looked for. It dashed their hopes to pieces. No blackness of sorrow ever settled over any band of people more completely than theirs. It was like a midnight sky without a single star. They could look back and say, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." And then a fact transpired, and this fact altered their mood for all time. The fact that happened is without a question the most important fact in the history of our race in its implications and its far-reaching results, the most tremendous fact that ever happened on this planet. The man who had died between two thieves and who had been laid in Joseph's rock-hewn tomb a mutilated corpse, got up out of that grave, a victor over death, and stood with his foot on the neck of death on heaven's side of an empty tomb, and claimed all authority in heaven and

on earth, and then in sight of his followers, rose majestically from earth, disappeared into heaven, and there, on a new plane, continued to exercise his mighty ministry of grace. This fact for them changed the moral climate of the world. It changed their thinking concerning God, themselves, sin, death, redemption, resurrection, the future of Christ's kingdom—everything.

We all know how important a mood is. Yonder at King's Bay, Spitzbergen, a group of fifty men are preparing an aeroplane for an attempted flight to the North Pole. They build a runway of trampled snow nearly a mile long down to the hillside. When all is ready, the expert airmen enter the plane and they undertake to take off. There is a swift run down the hillside, and then she lands with her nose in a snowbank. The attempt is a failure. Some of the men are so weary they can hardly stand. The climate is freezing cold. Men in a different mood would have been discouraged, but under the inspiration of their great leader, weary as they are, they immediately push and carry that great plane back up the hill to the top and begin again the work of preparation for the attempted flight. Then that night, when the little village lies asleep under the midnight sun, once more the engines begin to purr and the propellers to revolve and, lo, as she rushes down the northern side, she rises from the snow and they are off. In sixteen hours and a half, they accomplish what it took Peary four hundred days to do. They reached the North Pole, circled over it,

taking photographs of the region, and flew back again, all in the same day to their landing place at King's Bay. It was the mood of these men that wrested victory from the jaws of defeat.

Let us examine for a little the mood of the group, the mood that was created in this group of men by the tremendous fact that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

First of all, *it was a mood of joyful elation.* They were lifted from gloom to ecstatic joy. They were lifted from despair to deathless hope. They were lifted from a darkness that could not be described into the brightness of a morning that was almost like heaven. Nothing around them in their circumstances had changed. There was still the same chilled indifference on the part of the multitude, the same fears and bigoted opposition on the part of the Jewish hierarchy. But now obstacles were minimized, hope was in the ascendant, and joy that could not be told filled their hearts with the very elation and triumph of God, and all this simply because they knew that Jesus had risen from the dead.

A second element in *their mood was a dauntless courage.* Their numbers were small. They had no money. They had no prestige or social position. There were no armies to back them. There was no organization behind them with any political influence. They looked like a flock of sheep in a pack of timber-wolves, but the one fact that their Master had risen in his resur-

rection life and was beginning to operate on a plane where the Roman Emperor exercised no power, gave to them the kind of courage that anticipated a world conquest from the start. They did not hesitate to "reach a hand through time" and gather the far-off interest of their labors in faith right now. They knew now that their Master never could be defeated, that his plans were the ground-plans of the eternal, and that no matter how often the kingdoms of this world had to be changed and molded, superseded and supplanted, in order to make room for him, the program of the future was nothing else than the certain advancing kingdom of Christ. This lent to them a courage that amazed even their persecutors and detractors. They could go now to the teeth of tigers and lions, they could even illumine the chariot course of Nero as blazing torches clad in pitch shirts, and that with a smile of ineffable triumph.

Another element in *this mood is that of completest sympathy with, and consecration to, their Master's purpose.* During his earthly ministry their life had been more and more merged in his. They learned to follow him. His will had become increasingly their will. They had been molded by him, but never before had they had such a glimpse of the greatness of his plans and such a whole-hearted and sympathetic devotion thereto as now. He had been a magnet while with them, but they felt now that from his throne in heaven he was exercising the magnetism of grace with

a power never known by them before. This mood led them to an immediate devotion of themselves to his cause, an immediate consecration of their powers and possessions, a joyful, God-intoxicated, reckless abandonment of themselves to the vision which he had given them, that vision being himself alive beyond the grave. As we look back over the centuries, we may confidently affirm that just in so far as the mood of Pentecost has possessed the church in the different ages in her long and checkered career, just so far has she been able to accomplish the thing for which Jesus came, and lived, and died, and rose, namely, the establishment of God's kingdom upon earth. Happily we know that instead of this mood now being but a faint, fading, beautiful mirage on the far horizon of the past, it can be reproduced with new power in every generation and in every life. Jesus, the living Saviour, is our everlasting contemporary. He is as much at home with the generation to which we belong and in our part of the world as he was to the men in whose memory the tragedy of Calvary was so recent.

God help us to reproduce in ourselves permanently the Mood of Pentecost and its mighty outcome.

X

THE MESSAGE OF PENTECOST

God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. —*Acts 2: 36.*

THE MESSAGE OF PENTECOST

From this same text we have derived the theme "The Mood of Pentecost." Now I am going to ask you to think of "The Message of Pentecost."

On the former occasion we saw that the mood of these early disciples was occasioned and created by a tremendous fact, namely the resurrection of their Master. We are interested this morning in ascertaining what kind of an explanation they will give of this resurrection and what light it will shed upon other facts of Christ and his revelation. We had occasion to say that Christ, and Christ supremely risen from the dead, changed for them the moral climate of the world. His resurrection changed for them their view of everything concerning God and man.

First of all, *his resurrection tremendously changed their view of him.* They had known him on earth as a man. Truly, they had known him as more than a man. They had never fully reasoned it out, but there were things about him which overflowed even the category of perfect manhood, and induced in them the kind of homage and kind of worship that a man cannot and does not give to his fellow men. They had learned in a measure to worship him with a kind of adoring surrender that the soul gives only to God. But when they knew that he had risen from the dead, not simply

as Lazarus rose, into the old life to die again, but that he had risen into a new and immortal life, that death could never touch, their conception of him was enlarged beyond the power of words to describe. He had been to them Jesus. He had been to them the Messiah. Indeed, they had learned in a limited way to call him "Lord," but now they learned to use the word "Lord" with unlimited range. There was nothing that could be said, or sung, or taught, concerning him that was too great or too high. They placed him in a different class from all the other great religious leaders of history. Indeed, in a class entirely by himself.

It is not too much to say that his resurrection shed its gleam backward over all that he had said and done and been while with them, and heightened and enlarged the meaning of every word and action. It lent to the slightest word he had ever spoken, to the most commonplace deed, an unearthly value and authority. Furthermore, there began to grow upon the consciousness of the church this feeling, that if Calvary was not the end of him, then perhaps Bethlehem was not the beginning of him, and the sense of his preincarnate life growing out of Christian consciousness, buttressed, it is true, by some things he, himself, had said, was the effect of the scenes of his life after Calvary in the glory of the resurrection. They began to see now, as they never did before that they were dealing with the eternal Christ; that his stay on earth was but an epi-

sode in his career; that he had been with the Father from the beginning; that he had stooped to earth and to human form for our salvation; that he had now taken his place again in the fulness of the Father's glory. The resurrection was the capstone of the revelation of Christ, himself.

In the second place, *his resurrection changed their appreciation of the meaning of his death.* When Jesus died, there was not one single man or woman that stood around that cross who knew the meaning of that tragedy. The penitent thief who hung beside him seemed to reach further into the mystery than any when he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He, alone, of all that crowd saw a kingdom beyond the cross, but now they begin to interpret the meaning of that death in the light of that resurrection, and Peter does not hesitate to declare that the death of Jesus was not a disaster, but a design; that so far from being an unfortunate doom brought about by human sin and hate, it was the ground-plan of God; that the cross that stood on Calvary had been in the heart of God from eternity and that the death of Jesus was a deliberate working out of something older than the human race. But he goes further! He dares to affirm that this death has universal relations with the race of men and with the problem of human sin everywhere. When the audience asked, "What shall we do?" his answer was, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remis-

sion of your sins." We admit that the Cross of Christ is the despair of the intellectual man, but it is the very life of the spiritual man. No theory of the atonement has ever yet been propounded ample enough to be entirely satisfactory. We put together all the scriptures spoken by our Lord, himself, and by his apostles concerning the meaning of that death, and we are left with a few great, simple postulates:

First, his death was the manifestation of the everlasting love of God. Second, it was on account of human sin in some high sense vicarious and substitutionary. Third, it is effectual unto those who believe for the purpose for which it was intended. Fourth, there is an experience and assurance of forgiveness and salvation attainable by those who believe in Jesus Christ as their crucified Saviour which, so far as history goes, seems to be attainable in no other way.

In other words, the grace of God, boundless, free and undeserved, is mediated to mankind through him who came, the beloved of the Father, and lived and died in love for men.

We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear;
But we believe it was for us,
He hung and suffered there.

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.

His resurrection shed a new meaning upon his prospects for the future. His kingdom was now assured. The gates of hell would in vain strive to prevail against it. His victory was certain. This was the apostolic interpretation of that death and resurrection. The thinking of the church under the guidance of the spirit from that time to this has amplified and enlarged it, but has not materially altered its substance.

We go back today and repeat with assurance the great declaration of Simon Peter on that day, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made him, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

XI

CRIPPLED HUMANITY FACE TO FACE WITH AN INFINITE SAVIOUR

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, rise up and walk.

Acts 3: 6.

CRIPPLED HUMANITY FACE TO FACE WITH AN INFINITE SAVIOUR

It is three o'clock in the afternoon as we count time. Two men are walking up to the temple in old Jerusalem. They are Jews, but they are something more than Jews. They are Jews into whose lives has come an experience that has altered the color of the universe and changed their sense of value forever. They have found a new reservoir of power in a person. They have lived with him. He has been their Teacher, their Master, and their close, personal Friend. They have had a degree of intimacy with him unknown before between teacher and pupil in all human history.

He has died a sudden and violent death while still a young man, and left them for the time disconsolate, and then he has returned to them by a resurrection, and now they have learned to interpret his life and death in the light of his resurrection and to do so they have read into it his redeeming meaning and value for all mankind. He has gone from them now again, yet he is not gone. The glory of his presence is over them. They are more sure of him as being present with them than if they could see him with their eyes, hear him with their ears, or touch him with their hands. He has become to them the central sun of the universe, the bedrock fact of life. Their spirits breathe him as their

bodies breathe air. They know that they live in him, and they are learning under the glory of his presence to interpret everything in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity, in the light of his mission, his person, his purpose. They have no formula in which they can fully state his case. They know he is the Son of man. They were well acquainted with his mother and brothers and sisters. They know he is the eternal Son of God, that he came out of the infinite, that his words had in them the gentleness and neighborliness of a brother man, and the infinite authority of the everlasting. His social contacts with them, as he ate their bread and walked the paths of Galilee and Judea with them, were real human, social contacts, with all the beauty and friendliness that these have at their best, and yet—and yet, his every word had about it a tang of the other world. His way of directing every situation had in it the sweep of eternity and the finality of everlasting judgment of God. All this and much more that cannot be put into words, they were conscious of in the glow that was over their spirits as they walked in his light and lived their life of faith in him.

Walking thus up to the temple, they come upon a lame man. Indeed, he had been lame from birth. They did not stop to philosophize that this man was a type of the whole race, handicapped by limitations that are not the outcome of nature but the outcome of sin. These men are not philosophers, but they immediately become interested in this man, and suddenly it dawns

upon them that they are standing between this poor man in his crippled condition and One in whom dwells all the healing power of God, and that what the Master is bestowing upon them is not for themselves but for distribution; that the thrill of the bounty of God that fills them is for this poor man as well as for themselves.

I say again, they are not philosophers, but they have learned that while the world is regulated by law and while these laws, instead of being statute-book affairs, are ground into the very nature of things, that law as we understand it is not the last and highest word in human life. They know that there has come into the world, and they have lived with him, One who is the author of law and whose greatness and fulness of grace cannot be adequately expressed in any law, and he is standing there, gazing at yon crippled man. They are not thinking of themselves as exponents of the law but as the link between a living, loving, mighty, resourceful, and infinite Saviour, and a man who needs just exactly what Jesus can give.

As they stop, the poor fellow holds out his hand for alms. He is looking at them and not beyond. Peter, what have you to give him? "I, Simon Peter, have nothing, but I have not exhausted my bank account until I have exhausted the bank account of my friend and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I will dare to draw on him. He has authorized me to do so. He has said that I am to love others as he loves me. I know there is no measure to his love to me. I know that he loves

this poor crippled man as really as he does me. I know that he brought me to union with himself on purpose that I might be the distributor of his royal bounty to those who do not know him so well." And then, with splendid daring of faith, Simon Peter said: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, rise up and walk."

And then something happened. The man sprang to his feet. He did the impossible. He experienced the unbelievable. One thing we have purposely omitted. We mention it now. With the word, Peter stretched out his hand and lifted him to his feet. It was not Peter's outstretched hand that wrought the cure, but it was an apt symbol of the sympathy of one who was the medium through whom the great gift was brought.

This made a sensation—when "all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the Temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."

And now Simon Peter finds himself not simply face to face with the man who has been healed, but face to face with the crowd who want to know what is what, and it is his task to interpret for them this mighty happening. His interpretation is simplicity itself. It is straightforwardness of the straightest kind. "Why do you stare at us as if we had made him walk by our own power or holiness?"

Here then is a fact. However people may interpret it, there is no denying the reality of the fact. The man is well known. His handicap from birth is well known, and here he stands before them, an athlete in physical vigor, and now Peter makes the tremendous declaration: "Jesus, sent by God, repudiated by you, condemned by Pilate, killed, raised from the dead by the power of God, witnessed in his resurrection life by us who knew him in his earthly life—he has made this man whole before you all."

If this is not a true explanation of what happened then the true explanation has never been furnished and never can be. It is like a flash of light from the central sun. It needs no argument. It is its own argument in its directness and transparency and power. This man is a type; aye, more, he is a representative of our entire humanity. We do not start even. Our fathers called it total depravity, original sin. Drop those words, if you please, but when you have dropped the words, you still have to account for the fact that mankind go astray and that universally we are a race of sinners, that we are the only beings on earth who persistently go contrary to the law of our being. No bird in the air, no fish in the sea, does it, but man does the thing he knows is wrong, suffers the consequences, and the tendency to do so is transmitted from generation to generation.

I hold no brief for the defense of any of the old formulas. It is the fact that engages my attention, and

it is to that I ask you to look. Mankind is crippled and handicapped by the fact of sin. Its progress is greater in one life than in another. Its existence is undeniable and universal. No flowers of rhetoric can dispose of it. There is but one remedy. That remedy is in him.

Before Peter finished, he said to that crowd, turning from the matter of physical cure to the matter of spiritual regeneration, " Repent and turn, to have your sins blotted out, so that a breathing-space may be vouchsafed you, and that the Lord may send Jesus Christ, your long-decreed Christ, who must be kept in heaven until the period of the great restoration. God raised up his servant, and sent him to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

There is only one point in this story. It is this: In Jesus Christ, the world's Saviour, in what he is, in what he has, in what he can do, in what he purposes to do, is the cure for the ills of this world, individually and collectively. You do not need for salvation Christ plus. You need only Christ for forgiveness for the past. It is the only thing that God asks or provides, and the only thing that you need to care anything about. For deliverance from its slavery and power, his presence, his spirit, his regenerating and uplifting grace, is all that you need for the development of the finest kind of Christian character in his likeness. He is to you what the sunlight is to the flowers, what the soul is to the body, the life of life, life more abundant;

and when we turn from the life of the individual to the larger life of the community, the nation, or the nations of the world, the same is absolutely true.

The very day that all the nations of this world, in the League of Nations, place him in the position of supreme authority, obey him, follow him—that very day the world's most vexing and galling problems will be solved. God has put into his Son, Jesus Christ, all that he has to give to this world, namely, himself, in the fulness of love, grace, and saving efficiency.

Thou, oh, Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.

XII

MAKING GRADUAL STEPS FOR A BEGINNER

Born blind!

—John 9: 2.

MAKING GRADUAL STEPS FOR A BEGINNER

"Born blind!" Do you get the full force of it? I fear that none of us who have enjoyed good sight through life and have always taken it for granted can enter at all into the meaning of those two strange words *"born blind."* He met Jesus. This is the most momentous thing that can ever happen to any one in this life. The Master's method with him was direct, frank, and tender. He quietly mixed some saliva with clay, smeared his eyes, and said, "Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash."

Why this application of clay? In other cases he healed blindness without any applications whatever, except his word. The reason lies deep, but not out of sight. Remember, Jesus is dealing, not simply with a case of blindness, but with a man. He is going to be more to this man than a healer. He is going to be a Saviour. He is seeking a right relation and understanding with him which can only come through the means of faith. For this reason he aims to help his faith while he gives him sight.

We read nothing about the science of psychology in the New Testament, but if psychology means the understanding of a human being, knowing what is in the mind, then Jesus is the supreme psychologist of the

ages. He knows that a faith, ever so small, ever so faint, grows by being expressed in action. A man is built for expression. His body ends in feet, hands, and tongue, that he may go, do, and speak. The body is the outward and visible symbol of the inward self. He was giving this man a hand in the matter. How much the clay application had to do with his healing, I know not. Perhaps nothing, but it had a lot to do with the conscious birth of his faith. That act of obedience turned his face definitely in the direction of a right relation to the Lord Jesus. Every step he took as he went on, tapping the road with his stick till he reached the pool of Siloam, was a step not only toward eyesight but toward the life of the spiritual world. He washed. Was he healed? Where, pray, would the honor and integrity of Jesus be if he had not been healed? When a man does what God commands him in simple faith, the responsibility for the outcome rests then on God. It is impossible for us even to imagine what he felt when, for the first time, he saw. He was a new man in a new world. It created a tremendous sensation among the people who knew him, and a lively discussion as well. Some said: "I know this man. He was the blind beggar."

Others said: "No. A case of mistaken identity. We know it cannot be because such a restoration is impossible."

Perhaps they appealed to him. His answer is straightforward and truthful: "The man they call

' Jesus ' made some clay, smeared my eyes with it, and told me to go and wash them in Siloam; so I went and washed them, and I got my sight."

Please notice, however, the inadequacy in this confession. " A man they call ' Jesus.' " Is that the best you can do, sir? Yes, that is the best he can do just now. But wait a bit. The important thing is not how far a man has gone, but which way is he going. Watch him for a little! The wrangling among the bystanders proceeds, one side maintaining that Jesus cannot be a servant of God because he has done this thing on the Sabbath Day, which was a clear breach of their man-made rules for that day. The other group, with a good deal more insight, were asking, " How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? "

They turn again to the man who was healed, asking, " What sayest thou of him since now he has opened thine eyes? "

He said, " He is a prophet." Ha, ha! Here is a real advance. First, " A man called Jesus," now, " A prophet." Do not miss the meaning of this great word. A prophet is not simply a foreteller, he is a forthteller, one who speaks and acts by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. This man, surrounded by a babble of tongues, is following one clear gleam and is registering real advance. They call his parents now. Their testimony is neutral. Timidity sealed their lips except to say: " We know that this is our son who was born blind, but as to how, we know nothing at all; of

that you must ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself."

Once again they come back to him. "Give God the praise. This man we know is only a sinner." Quick and clear came his answer. "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." The two great words are "from God." He is making long strides. First, "A man called Jesus"; second, "A prophet"; third, "from God."

They would hear no more and resorted to the tactics of such men in all ages, when worsted in argument, they cast him out; that is, expelled him from the synagogue. In our day, to be expelled from the church may or may not be a very serious thing. When a church is compelled in the fear of God to disfellowship a man or woman for seemingly incorrigible wickedness, it is a fearfully serious thing. We have a kind of feeling that what has been done on earth has been ratified in heaven when it has been done in accord with the teaching of the Lord Jesus, but we have seen a man expelled from the church when the best sermon to the whole community was solidly on his side so that he really looked more respectable than the body that expelled him. Not so was it in that day. This action of theirs made him not only a religious outcast, but a social and economic pariah as well. It cut him off from all intercourse with his fellows and virtually imperilled his daily bread.

"Jesus heard it and went and found him." I regard

this statement as one of the priceless pearls of the gospel. The Master had on hand his Father's business with all its vastness and importance, but here was a man who, with an imperfect faith, had risked all and lost all to be true to him. If need be Jesus would have stopped the clock of the heavens to find that man.

When he found him, he said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man replied: "Who is that, sir? Tell me that I may believe on him."

Jesus answered: "You have seen him. He is talking to you."

He replied, "I do believe," and he worshiped him.

Let's see how far this man has traveled in this story so briefly told. How far is it from simply "A man called Jesus" to "Jesus, the Son of God," with a soul bowed before him in adoring worship. It is a long way. This man made the journey by following the light he had. You may put this down as an unchanging law of the spiritual life. Keep your conduct abreast of your conscience, and your conscience will be increasingly illumined with the radiance of God.

XIII

GUARANTEED TITLE-DEEDS

Genesis 13: 1-17.

GUARANTEED TITLE-DEEDS

Approximately four thousand years ago, up yonder in a little valley in Palestine, I see a circle of black, goats'-hair tents. A man comes out of one of them, an elderly man, and he makes a sign to a man who has come out of another tent, and the two men walk up on the hillside where they are alone, and then the older man engages the younger in very serious conversation. One of them is the uncle, and one the nephew. That nephew owes everything he has in this world to that uncle. He was an orphan boy. His uncle picked him up and took him into his house. Now, they have both become very rich. They are nomads, moving from place to place, wherever the pasture is most inviting. The older man is what would be called in our day a great "sheik." The two men have had no quarrel at all, but the herdsmen of the two men, rough, uncouth fellows, have gotten into a tremendous fight over the pasture lands. The one man says, "This land is our master's," and the other says, "Why, it is not; it belongs to our master." The supposition is that the quarrel had gone pretty far. The barbarian tribes round about were perfectly willing they should fight, and they would stand by and take charge of the booty afterward. Remember, the younger man owes everything he has to his uncle.

The older man calls his nephew and says to him, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren." And then, sweeping his arm around the horizon, he says: "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

That would have been a splendid time for the young man to have remembered something. Never was there a man who had a finer chance for an exhibition of honest gratitude than he had right then. It would have been a splendid time to have said: "Uncle, you know when you took me up, a homeless boy, I had nothing. You laid the foundation of my fortune, and all I have I owe to you. Instead of my taking my choice of the land, I would suggest that you do it." He didn't say anything of the kind, but with the shrewd eye of a cattle-breeder and grazer, he looked up to the hills and then at the valley, and it didn't take him long to decide that the richer part lay down there in the valley, and he said, "Uncle, I will take that for my portion," and he moved to Sodom and Gomorrah, and "Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan."

Now, I want you to go back and see what was in this old man's heart that made him so magnificently generous. There is a principle behind it. When you turn to the New Testament and witness that marvelous

gift of Christ, you will find the New Testament is enfolded in the Old, and the Old is unfolded in the New, as the flower is enfolded in the bud, and as the bud bursts into flower. You cannot build a human life in compartments, putting your business into one compartment and your religion into another. If you put one into one compartment, and the other into another, and have an airtight bulkhead between them, both will suffer. Your religion will become stale and your business selfish. Abraham understood that religion was not in a compartment by itself, but was a divine principle that was intended to guide the whole of life, and he never thought of such a thing as having a business that was not guided by religion, or a religion that could not carry over into business.

"Abraham, how can you afford to be so magnificently generous? You picked up this young man and both of you have grown rich, but you know, when it comes to a matter of rights, you have the whole right, and if he is selfish enough to choose the best and leave the second best to you, how is it that you can be so generous?"

Abraham will tell you a secret. I don't know how much Lot knew about it, but Abraham has a secret to tell. It is this: "The Lord God, Jehovah, has given me a promise in my heart, and in that promise he has said, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.' It is all mine."

"Have you a deed to it? Show me the writings."

"I don't need any writings."

"Have you a deed?"

"Yes, and it is recorded in the title-office on high, and God's signature is attached to it. I own the whole thing, and for that reason I can afford to be generous."

I take Lot aside and talk to him: "Lot, when your uncle offered you a choice of land, it didn't take you long to decide. Well, don't you owe much to your uncle?"

"Yes, I must confess I do, but business is business, and, after all, I don't think much fault can be found with a man for looking out for number one. He is perfectly satisfied, and if he is, why shouldn't I be?"

You have the two types of mind. Don't find too much fault with Lot. He hasn't the larger vision, and the reason is because his soul has never had a stand-in with the Lord God. Abraham has the longer vision, and the reason he has is because he has been taken into the confidence of God.

"Abraham, you must be a shrewd man, or your flocks would not have grown as they have. Abraham, don't you know the value of real estate and the better pasture when you see it?"

"Yes, I do."

"How do you account for your being so generous then?"

Abraham would say: "Yes, I know the value of real estate; but I know that real estate and pastures and

flocks and everything that goes along with them are only God's second best, and since God has given me his best, I can afford to be generous with his second best."

And, away back there on the horizon of time, four thousand years ago, a man teaches us the *relationship of spiritual blessings and material blessings.* He did not undervalue material blessings, but he weighed everything in the light of eternal values and reasoned like this: The first and highest riches a man can have in this world is fellowship with the living God, and having that fellowship with the living God, he realizes that even when it applies to material things, God is the maker and dispenser of material things, so I am going to hold what I have as the good gift of God, and while I hold it as the good gift of God, I realize that it is only God's second best, and the best, the fellowship with himself, and the certainty of his presence, no one can take that away.

"Abraham, you seem to be prodigal."

"Oh, no, I am only sharing with Lot God's second best, and not the best. After Lot and I have passed over to the other side, my children will own this land for many and many a generation. Not only is that so, but God has given me something that is worth more than all the land on earth. He has promised me—and this is the largest promise in the Old Testament—that all the scattered millions that live on this earth are going to be blessed through me. Yes, God is going to make me the fountain that will lave every shore and

touch all the nations and mold them into the everlasting kingdom of God. What is a bit of real estate beside that?"

It was the conscious possession of the greater thing that made him generous in the smaller thing. Here is a tremendous principle which is wrought out in the New Testament in the life and death of Jesus. Jesus is standing in Pilate's judgment-hall. Things have gone hard with him. A man who has tried to do good to every one has been turned over to be crucified.

"I say, Master, how can you justify God in a thing like this?"

Jesus could have answered: "But you don't see what my Father has given me. It is true my life is going to be sacrificed on the cross, but my Father has given me a kingdom that stretches into the vast eternity of the future, that covers the face of the world and includes God's entire plan for this world. I am simply going back to the glory that I had with him before the world was. I can afford to forgive my murderers; I can afford to forgive the dying thief by my side. These possessions are only God's temporary, second best, while God's best that fills all heaven and will girdle this world with grace, all that is mine and no devil on earth can take it away. I can afford to be generous in the smaller things."

The Christian is taught to gauge his attitude toward other men, not by their attitude toward him, but by God's attitude to him. Some one does me an injury.

Shall I requite that injury with revenge? God comes in and says, "I am going to ask you to treat that man not as he treated you, but as I treat you." Listen: "Love one another as I love you."

On that last night when Jesus girded himself and washed the feet of the disciples, he was showing the same love that God showed him. When we show grace to others, we are gauging our treatment of others by God's treatment of us. You remember, Jesus said something about a second mile. Many people talk about that, but don't know where it came from. It was Jesus who said, "If a man compel me to go against my will with him one mile, I will go two."

Jesus Christ is God going the second mile, and as Christ is God's second mile, he shows us how to go the second mile. The romance of life, that caps all the romances of this world, is the man or the woman learning to live this way toward his fellows. I can forgive him because God has forgiven me. I can love him when he is unlovely because God has loved me when I have been unlovely. As God has poured out the riches of his grace upon us, he makes it possible for us to pour out the riches of grace on others. Some one says: "Isn't that going a good way? To forgive some one who has injured you and is watching for a chance to injure you again?"

Yes, it is a good deal, but do you think you will ever be able to go as far in that direction as God has in forgiving you? I come into his presence and say,

"What plea can I present?" I cannot present any except one, and that is: "Oh, God, that is the way you are made. I plead thy own mercy." The Cross of Jesus Christ is the standard and norm in the midst of the ages of God's attitude toward the sinful sons of men. I don't have to guess at God's attitude toward me, but just look at the Cross and there it is written. What he manifested on the Cross is what I feel toward you all the time, and I call you thus into fellowship with myself. I forgive the sins that have no excuse! I forgive the blackest sins! I forgive the secret sins! I forgive them all! What for? That I may send you forth into life, and that you may go and show the same kind of an attitude toward others that I show toward you.

Some one says, "And where should we stop?" Don't stop until God stops. And what shall be the measure? Don't have any measure but God.

This is the highest gospel for practise that I know anything about. It is that you and I are privileged to gauge our relationship to others by God's relationship to us, and to say, "I will not curtail, and I will not narrow and I will not limit my love to others until God curtails, and narrows, and limits his love to us." When you go forth and show a little of the grace of God to some one who does not deserve it, and then come back into the secret place, God meets you and pours out a tide of grace that you did not have before, and every time you do, he blesses you.

I wonder, when Lot turned away and said, "All right, Abraham, I will take that valley," and Abraham said, "All right, I will take the hills of Canaan, I can find a place for my herds"—I wonder if, when he turned away, Abraham had a little sinking of heart and thought, "I have gone too far in being generous to that selfish man." Let us see what happened. He met God, and Jehovah said to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

That is just like God. He came to Abraham and said: "You have been generous with that nephew of yours, I am going to show you what real generosity is. Swing your eyes around the whole horizon. I will give it all to you and your seed forever, and that is only a starter. I will give you a seed numerous as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."

It took the unfolding of the ages to show how he was going to do it. "Out from your seed will come one through whom all the scattered nations of the earth will be reconciled, and my plans for this world and for this human race will find their channel and outlet through you and through your seed."

Some years ago, when we were raising a large missionary fund, I remember one layman said, "We ought to hold our earthly possessions with a firm hand but

with a loose grasp." In other words, the Christian should handle earthly property like a sensible man, with a firm hand, but at the same time be always ready to let go in the interest of the larger things of the kingdom which cannot be counted in this world at all.

We look back at that great figure, and see his magnificent generosity. Then we see the Lord God coming to him and saying: "Lift up thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth then shall thy seed also be numbered."

And then God poured out a flood of promises that reached to the everlasting bounds of the hills. If we will take Jesus seriously and go out into life determined that we will show toward others, not the kind of disposition that they show toward us, but the kind Christ shows to us, every time we do it and come back into the secret place, our Lord Jesus will pour out upon us his grace until we say, "My cup runneth over," or "I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me." He will never call you to anything but that he will give you a grace that will compensate.

I wonder if there is some one here who does not know by personal experience what it is to deal with Christ. You do not need any introduction. Christ sits in the reception-room of everlasting mercy.

XIV

JESUS REVERSES ESTIMATES OF LIFE VALUES

Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant.

—*Mark 10: 43.*

JESUS REVERSES ESTIMATES OF LIFE VALUES

From the very beginning men have clung tenaciously to the idea that the sign of greatness is to master others, to conquer them, to make them serve us, to let our will dominate others, to have our own way. I doubt if in all human thought there is a single idea more persistent, more deeply ingrained in the very warp and woof of men's thinking and acting, an idea that serves human selfishness more completely or is harder to dislodge. Jesus of Nazareth came into our human life. He did many things that marked him as having superhuman courage. Not the least of them was that he set himself squarely athwart this tendency of human thought and flatly contradicted what men had fondly believed and practised for thousands of years. He deliberately declared that real greatness—greatness that will last—consists not in making others serve you, but in humbly and lovingly serving them; that he who yields in love is far greater than he who smites in anger; that the supreme sign of greatness is consideration for the welfare of others and willingness to stoop—to stoop without any limit if need be—that they may be served and blessed and uplifted, and that here lies an empire, a reign of power compared with which our ministry to others is a brief, shifting, evanescent, worthless thing.

This made him a puzzle to his age. To many it made him ridiculous. It made him a puzzle to his disciples, even to the last hour of his life. It makes him a puzzle to multitudes of men who pride themselves on being practical today. Simon Peter, after three years of discipleship, and very honest discipleship at that, did not learn this lesson at all, and when, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, he was probably the most astonished man there when Jesus said, "Put up the sword into the sheath, for all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword," and then he saw the Master touch the ear and heal it. It takes the long view of the prophet, aye, and more than a prophet, to choose this kind of a model for life. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." It took one who saw, as men do not see, how the universe was built, what were the unshakable principles of God himself, what was permanent, final, eternal, deliberately to choose this method of living in flat contradiction of what was going on around him. By this principle he lived. By it he died. The jeering mob that surrounded his cross had no conception of it; all they saw was weakness. They were incapable of recognizing that they were looking upon the most awful exhibition of moral strength earth had ever seen. Even the disciples only dimly guessed what he meant as they looked upon that last tragedy with regretful eyes, thinking

that their Master was making a mistake and was dying in weakness.

Has history really vindicated Christ? The answer is to be found by answering two questions. First, *where are the mighty conquerors and mighty nations of his day?* You must search the dusty archives of history to find them at all. They have vanished from earth like a nightmare. The men who made nations tremble with the tread of their marching armies are now the curiosities of semibarbarism, some of them splendid examples of what men ought not to be. What about this quiet Carpenter, this gentle Teacher, this Man who smote not all, that answered the aggressions of his enemies with the kindness of God? His life today is so built into the best civilization of this world that in order to remove him it would be necessary to tear to pieces the entire fabric of civilization. Go through the libraries of this world and cut out all that he has contributed, and see what the libraries would look like! Eliminate from the art-galleries of the world all that his spirit has contributed to them, and what kind of a sorry spectacle would you have? Cut out all the benevolent and helpful institutions in human life that have grown up directly or indirectly as the result of his presence on earth, and what would human society look like? Ruthlessly tear out of the educational systems of the world his entire contribution, and see what you have left of the schools and colleges of the world. And, with all the sad admissions that we

have to make concerning selfishness in the world of industry and business, take out of industry all of the influences today that come directly from the presence of Jesus in this world, and see what kind of an impossible sweatshop the world would be. By the time you got through with this process you would wreck history beyond the possibility of rebuilding. You would wreck human society beyond reconstruction, and you would make this word a devil's conundrum with no solution.

This quiet idea of his, quietly set forth and then persistently lived, *was the most revolutionary thing in the history of human thought and action.* It turned the world upside down and is still doing so, and when we learn that it is the very principle by which God lives, that in it is the interpretation of God in human terms, that the meekness and gentleness of Jesus is the heart of God thrown open, the screen of history unsullied and undimmed, we need hardly be surprised that this ideal has persisted against all the attacks of men, against all the stupid slowness, obstinacy, and selfishness of the human mind, and bids fair to continue until it becomes the light of earth as it is now the light of heaven—until it becomes the ruling passion in human life as it is now the ruling passion in the heart of God. Our difficulty is not in understanding it but in being willing to adopt and practise it. It goes against the grain. We want to do unto others as they do unto us. He says, " Do unto others as you would have them do

unto you." We want to return evil for evil. We say that is what they deserve. He shows us that we have nothing to do with what they deserve. It is ours to return good for evil and to continue to do so until the good conquers and banishes the evil.

The greatest service Jesus ever rendered mankind was in the tragedy of the cross. After the last word had been spoken, the last miracle wrought, in silence and darkness, he laid down his life on behalf of a world that hated him and left the result to God in history. Nobody there that day guessed for a moment that that Cross would be the interpretation of all history; that it was the ground-plan of the universe; that this service for others without limit, without counting the cost even unto death, would be the one dynamic retranslated, reemphasized, reinterpreted, in human life; would lift, change, alter, transform, and transfigure human life until men the world over would glory in serving others as Christ served us, and the motto "Love one another as I have loved you" would become the norm of man's life. This is coming. It is coming with every rising and setting sun. Nothing can stop it. They who seek to do so are simply behind the times, fighting against fate, fighting against God. Jesus will reign supreme by being the loving servant of all humanity, and humanity will reach its supreme goal by serving him, in serving each other.

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